

No 189.

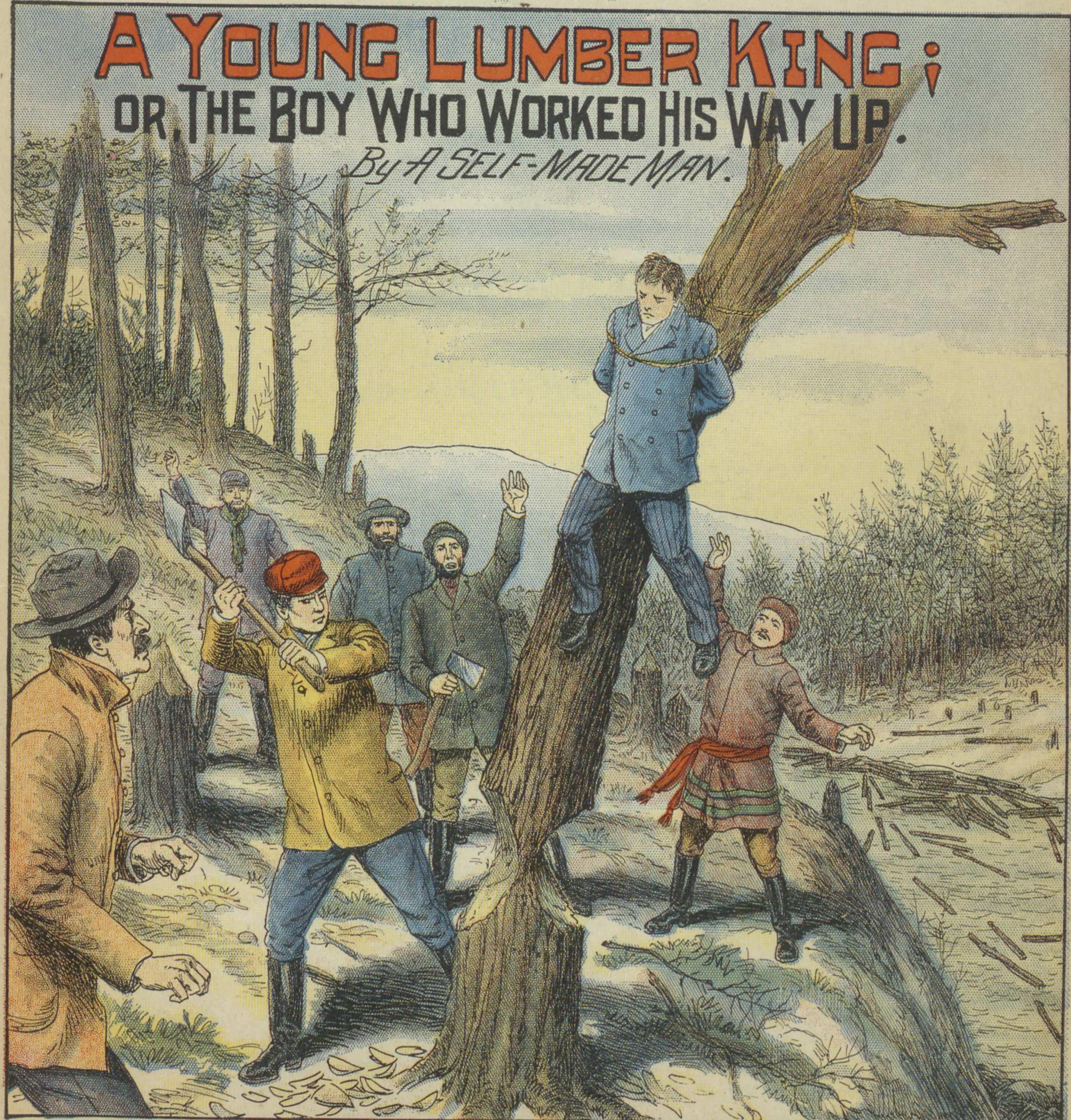
5 cents.

FAME AND FORTUNE

STORIES OF BOYS **WEEKLY.** WHO MAKE MONEY.

A YOUNG LUMBER KING ; OR, THE BOY WHO WORKED HIS WAY UP.

By A SELF-MADE MAN.



Bound helplessly to the tree, Fred could feel the jar made by each stroke of the axe. "You'll soon be sailin' down toward the rapids," laughed Silas McBee, sardonically, as the tree began to tilt over toward the river.

Fame and Fortune Weekly

STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY

Issued Weekly—By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1909, in the office of the Librarian of Congress, Washington, D. C., by Frank Tousey, Publisher, 24 Union Square, New York.

No. 189.

NEW YORK, MAY 14, 1909.

PRICE 5 CENTS.

A YOUNG LUMBER KING

OR,

THE BOY WHO WORKED HIS WAY UP

By A SELF-MADE MAN

CHAPTER I.

ADRIFT IN THE WILDS.

"Now, Fred," said Lawyer Singleton, as he and his ward were seated in the library of his home at Portland, Maine, one evening after dinner, "what are your plans for the future?"

"My plans!" ejaculated the bright-looking boy sitting opposite him.

"Yes. You are now practically a young lumber king. The property left you by your late grandfather, which I am holding in trust for you till you reach your majority, comprises several thousand acres of the best timber land in the northern part of this State. It is now being worked by a corporation called, as you know, the Northwestern Lumber Co. Your grandfather was president and owned nearly all of the stock, which reverts to you according to the provisions of his will. I own only enough of the stock to qualify me as a director, and as acting president I am in a position to look after your interests until you are old enough to take charge of things yourself. Now, what are your plans? Do you wish to go to college and at twenty-one step into the presidency and possession of your large property, with a fine education but no practical knowledge of the lumber business, compelled to rely on others to help you run the business; or have you the nerve and pluck to start out now and learn your own business from the ground floor up?"

"I think I would prefer to start out and learn the business."

"Good," replied the lawyer in a tone of satisfaction. "I am not disappointed in you, I see. You are made of the right stuff. Allow me to suggest how you ought to proceed. Several of my friends are going on a hunting expedition to Lake Chesuncook, the southern shores of which butt into your property. They leave next week by the Maine Central Railroad for Foxcroft, where they will change to the Bangor & Aroostook line for Moosehead on Lake Moosehead. From that point they have arranged to proceed on a sailboat to Northeast Carry, a village situated at the northern extremity of the lake, thence through a short waterway to the Penobscot River, and then by that stream northward to the northern point of Lake Chesuncook, which is their destination. You should make preparations to go with them. Take along an old suit of clothes. On arriving at the lake I will arrange that you are to be taken down the lake and put ashore at the mouth of the continuation of the Penobscot. There you will be left to your own resources within five miles of the logging camp of the Northwestern Lumber Co. Proceed along the river to the camp and apply for work as a complete stranger. The superintendent of the camp is Silas McBee. Start right in and make yourself familiar with the business of logging. No one will know that you are the real owner of the vast property, even if you give your real name, which I would advise you to do. How long you need stay there I leave entirely to yourself. In fact, from the moment I bid you good-by at the depot here I leave your future movements to be guided entirely by circumstances and your own judgment."

"Very well, sir, I will follow the plan as you have out-

lined it," replied Fred. "And now I will leave you, as I have an engagement for the evening which I must keep."

Thus speaking, the young lumber king left the presence of his guardian, fully resolved to go out in the wilds of the lumber region and work his own way up.

"What's that? You want a job?" snorted Silas McBee, the superintendent of the logging camp of the Northwestern Lumber Co, glaring at a plainly-attired boy who had approached him and asked for work.

"Yes, sir," replied the lad cheerfully.

"What in thunder can you do?" demanded McBee, sizing the boy up in a scornful way.

"I can make myself useful."

"Oh, you can?" replied the man with a palpable sneer. "Ever work in a loggin' camp?"

"No, sir."

"I thought you hadn't. You don't look as if you were used to hard work."

"I'm willing to do anything," said the boy earnestly.

"You couldn't do much around here—not to suit me, so you'd better go on your way."

"Where will I go?"

"You can go to Old Nick if you want to," replied McBee with a guffaw, as if he had said something witty.

"How far is the nearest town?"

"One hundred miles, more or less."

"The nearest village, then?"

"Thirty miles down the river."

The boy looked around upon the wild and romantic landscape, with its river hard by, its hills covered with thick forests of pine, maple, oak and other varieties, and its mountains in the background, across which the setting sun cast broad bands of light and shadow.

"You wouldn't send me adrift in this place, sir. I'd get lost at once and starve to death," said the boy.

The fact was obvious, and the superintendent stared at the lad.

"Where did you come from?" he asked.

"Lake Chesuncook."

"How did you get here?"

"I came down the river on a raft, which went to pieces about a mile above this place."

"Alone?" said the superintendent.

"Yes, alone."

"What brought you into this wilderness, anyway?"

"I came as far as Lake Chesuncook with a hunting party."

"Well, why didn't you stay with them?"

"I went into the woods with one of the men, got separated from him, and couldn't find my way back. I discovered a raft, with blankets and food, and set myself adrift, hoping to reach a settlement on the river. After the raft went to pieces I climbed a hill to look around and I saw this camp in the distance, so I came here."

"Humph! I s'pose I'll have to give you somethin' to do. What's your name?"

"Fred Drew."

"The cook is short handed and wants a helper. You can turn in and give him a hand. I s'pose you ain't particular what wages you get."

"I leave that to you."

"Sol Scott is the cook. His cabin is yonder. Go over there now and tell him I've hired you to help him for the present. If I find you a likely lad I may promote you to one of the gangs. That's all."

"Thank you, sir," replied Fred, walking away.

Silas McBee looked after him.

"He's too blamed gentlemanly to amount to much," he muttered. "He might be useful around the mill, though. Tolley is always gettin' drunk and givin' the engineer a peck of trouble. I intend to shake him at the first chance. In that case this chap might be able to fill his shoes."

The superintendent walked off toward his office and quarters at one end of the saw-mill, which at that hour was in full operation.

Fred Drew made his appearance at the door of the cook-house and looked in.

A middle-aged man in apron and shirt sleeves, with a funny bald head, was busy at the big range, on which were a collection of pots that gave off a pleasing odor.

The smell made the boy's mouth water, for he was awfully hungry, having had nothing to eat since morning.

"Are you Mr. Scott?" asked Fred.

The cook swung around and stared at the boy.

He wasn't in the habit of being addressed as Mister Scott, plain Sol being what he was called by everybody from the superintendent down.

He saw the boy was a stranger and wondered how he had come to the camp.

"I am Sol Scott," he replied. "What do you want?"

"The man who has charge of this place has hired me to act as your helper. He said you were short handed."

"McBee hired you to help me, eh?" said the cook in some surprise.

"Yes, I guess that's his name."

"He is the boss of the camp. His name is Silas McBee, and if you intend to stay here you want to mind your P's and Q's when he's around. He's a terror and no mistake, but you mustn't let him know I said that," added the cook in a subdued tone.

"Why should I? You're to be my boss, not he."

"But he's your boss, too. What's your name?"

Fred told him.

"I like your face and manner, and I hope we shall be friends."

"It won't be my fault if we are not," replied Fred cheerily.

"That's hearty now. I know I shall like you. Peel off your coat and I'll show you what to do. By the way, where are your duds?"

"Haven't any."

"Ain't you got a grip or something with a change of clothing, and other odds and ends?" asked Scott in astonishment.

"No. You see the whole of me as I stand."

"Why, how's that?"

Fred told an imaginary story of hard luck, explaining how he had got separated from the hunting party at Lake Chesuncook.

"You've had quite a hard time of it, sonny," said Scott.

"Yes. When the raft went to pieces and I landed on the bank of the river hungry and just as I stand, in the midst of the wilderness, I thought my time had about come."

"You're hungry, you say?" asked the cook, in a sympathetic tone.

"Hungry!" replied Fred. "Don't mention it. I'm famished!"

"Sit right down at that table, sonny, before you do a bit of work. I'll see that you get something to make you feel better. I've been hungry myself at different times in my life—once I nearly starved to death in a long boat at sea—and I know how it feels."

He put a plate of bread and butter, and some cold sliced venison before Fred, and then he handed him a tin cup of pure cold water.

"I haven't made the coffee for supper yet," he said, in an apologetic tone, "so you'll have to wait till later on for that. Just sail in and eat your fill and then you can start in and help me."

Fred needed no urging, and the way he made the prover-der disappear was a caution.

He ate as though he never expected to have another meal, and Sol Scott watched him approvingly.

Fred occasionally glanced at the cook out of the corner of his eyes.

He was a queer old chap, but the boy felt that he was all right, and he was sure that he would get on with him, for he liked him already.

When Fred had cleaned up the plates Scott asked him if he wanted any more.

"No, that will last me for awhile. I feel like a new boy already. I'm very much obliged to you, Mr. Scott."

"Hold hard, sonny, don't mister me. My handle is Sol, and you mustn't call me nothin' else."

"All right, and you can call me Fred."

"Of course. I wouldn't call you nothin' else, 'cept it might be sonny, which is a habit of mine. You won't need to set the table in the long room where the men eat till the things are washed up after supper, then you can set it so's to have it ready for mornin'. Now, just put some of that wood in the corner into the stove, and stir the pots in succession till I tell you to do somethin' else."

Fred got busy and did so well that the cook was tickled to death with him.

"We're goin' to get on first-class together. I hope the boss'll let you stay with me. I need a helper bad, and I rather cotton to you. There's somethin' about you I like, and when I take to a chap he's all right."

The cook found his duties much lightened, and the cheerful way that Fred conversed made time pass in a highly satisfactory way to the old man.

At length the whistle of the sawmill sounded and the men knocked off work.

They came in singly and in pairs to a trough on the outside of the cook-house, where there were soap, towels and water, to wash up, and then they filed into the long dining-room, which was merely a rough, unfinished shed, protected from the weather by layers of tarred canvas nailed over the cracks between the boards, the roof having the added advantage of a whole piece of tarred cloth, through which neither snow nor rain could penetrate.

It was part of Fred's duties to help the cook wait on the men, and when he made his appearance with tin cups of smoking coffee and plates of soup he was stared at by the gathering crowd with no little curiosity.

They wondered where he came from, but were too hungry to waste any time asking for information they would no doubt learn later on.

They noticed, however, that the boy was spry, and didn't seem to have a lazy bone in his body.

They rather liked his cheerful face, and were of the opinion that he was an acquisition to the camp, no matter what combination of circumstances brought him there.

CHAPTER II.

BREAKERS AHEAD.

The ordinary hands finished their meal and left the room to hang around outside in groups to talk in the gathering twilight.

Then Silas McBee appeared and took his place at the head of the table which was reserved for him, and Fred waited on him.

He did not appear to take any notice of the new boy, but nevertheless nothing the lad did escaped him.

The engineer came in and sat close to the superintendent, with whom he entered into conversation.

Later on the fireman slouched in and took his place at the foot of the table.

"Hello, where did yer spring from?" he asked Fred, when the boy brought him his plate of soup.

Tulley had a wicked eye, a sullen look, and his appearance was generally unsatisfactory.

The young lumber king decided that he was not a person to be trusted.

"I came from the river," answered the boy.

"What yer doin' up here on the river?"

"Nothing. I came here because I couldn't help myself."

"Why couldn't yer?" persisted Tulley.

"Because a raft usually goes with the tide and not against it."

"Then yer come from the north?"

"Yes," said Fred, walking away to get the rest of the fireman's meal.

"I don't like him," muttered Tulley, following Fred with a baleful look. "He's eddicated, and I hate eddicated chaps. They ain't no good."

Tulley evidently had his own particular standard by which he judged those persons with whom he was brought into contact.

Any one who moved on a higher plane than himself incurred his enmity sooner or later.

He hated men who were decent and good because his nature had nothing in common with such people.

There were some pretty tough fellows in the camp, though none quite as bad as himself, and he found mates among them.

He was more or less drunk about half the time, but where he got the liquor was a mystery to Silas McBee and the engineer.

There was a supply of spirits in camp, but the superintendent kept the key to the storeroom and gave the stuff out when he saw fit to do so.

He hadn't noticed that the supply had diminished on the quiet, so he was puzzled to account for the way in which the fireman got his booze.

He had threatened several times to send Tulley down

the river with a consignment of logs, but did not make good for some reason.

Tulley did not seem greatly afraid of being fired, though he managed to keep sober for awhile after every run-in he had with the superintendent.

He made no further remarks to Fred when the boy brought him the rest of his supper, much to the lad's relief.

"Who is that chap at the end of the table?" Fred asked the cook.

"That's Tulley, the fireman. He's a bad egg."

"He looks it. He isn't a man I'd care to meet alone in the woods on a dark night, especially if he owed me a grudge."

"You want to watch out for him. He's dangerous. Don't offend him if you can help it, for he's likely to get back at you in some underhand way," said Scott. "I heard he killed a man in a saloon row before he came here. It's a wonder McBee stands for him, for he drinks like a fish, and the mystery is where he gets the stuff."

"Oh, I'm not afraid of him," replied Fred, independently. "At the same time, I'm not looking for trouble, so I'll try to rub his fur the right way."

"That's right, sonny. Go slow with Dave Tulley. He's a bad man. And," here his voice dropped to a whisper while his eyes roved to the door communicating with the dining-room, "look out for Silas McBee. He isn't to be trusted any more than Tulley, though he is the big smoke in this camp."

"I'll keep your warning in mind, Sol, and mind my P's and Q's with the boss," said Fred. "I'm not anxious to have a run-in with him, for he could throw me out into the wilderness and then I'd be up against it for fair."

At that moment a thumping was heard in the next room.

"That's McBee. See what he wants," said the cook hastily.

Fred rushed into the eating room.

"Another cup of coffee," said the superintendent, sharply.

The boy brought it in a jiffy.

"Dobbs," said McBee to the engineer in a tone loud enough to reach Tulley's ears, "this is a new boy who blew into camp this afternoon. I've hired him to help Sol out, but if your fireman doesn't turn over a new leaf he's likely to find this boy in his place some fine day, and then he'll have to hunt a job somewhere else."

Tulley heard the remark, which was evidently intended for his ears; but instead of scowling at the superintendent he glowered at the young lumber king in a way that boded no good for the lad.

Fred caught his malevolent stare and felt decidedly uncomfortable under it.

He felt that trouble would certainly ensue if McBee ever put him in Tulley's place, and he sincerely hoped the occasion would never arise.

The boy escaped from the room as soon as he could and told the cook about the incident.

Sol Scott shook his head in a solemn way.

"There is no tellin' what McBee might do," he said. "His remark was doubtless meant for Tulley's ears, as a menace to him, and I fear the fireman will see in you an enemy whom he will wish to get rid of for his own interests."

Beware lest he strike at you in the dark, for it isn't his nature to do anything fair and above board."

The three men soon afterward left the eating room and then the cook and Fred had their own supper.

Notwithstanding his former feed, Fred ate heartily, particularly relishing the coffee, which Scott knew how to prepare to perfection.

The milk used was canned condensed cream of a prime quality, and improved its flavor if anything.

After the meal Fred helped wash the stack of dishes that had accumulated.

Then while the cook sat at the door, smoking his evening pipe, which was a great solace to him, he tidied up the kitchen and wound up with setting the long table in the eating room for the men's breakfast.

His duties over for the day, he joined Scott at the door and watched the full moon rise above the distant mountains.

"So you're an orphan, sonny?" said the cook.

"Yes. My mother died only a few months ago," replied the young lumber king, sadly, for this was a fact.

"You've got relatives, I s'pose, you thought of goin' to?"

"I've got relatives in Portland, but I have no idea of going near them at present. I intend to make my way up in the world first."

"I'll do what I can for you, sonny."

"Thank you, Sol. I know you mean that. We've only known one another a few hours, but it seems as if we'd been friends for years."

"Right you are, sonny. I ain't taken such a shine to any one for years as I have to you, and p'haps you won't regret havin' known me."

"Regret having known you, Sol? I should hope not! You're not like Dave Tulley or—Mr. McBee. You're the real goods and a yard square."

The cook, who was refilling his pipe, looked pleased.

"Fetch me a live coal from the stove," he said.

"Wouldn't a match suit you better?"

The old man shook his head.

"I like to light my pipe in the old-fashioned way," he said. "I don't care to suck brimstone when I can avoid it."

Fred brought him a red coal and his pipe was presently in working order.

"Now, sonny," he went on, "since you're stranded here without clothes other than what you have on your back, you must share mine till you can get some. I've a good supply and you are welcome to your choice."

"Thank you, Sol," replied Fred, gratefully. "By the way, where do I sleep?"

"With me in the caboose behind the kitchen. There's a spare bunk there with blankets and such. We'll be company for each other, and you'll be right on the spot."

"That will suit me first rate, Sol. I was afraid I'd have to bunk with the men. This is a fine night, isn't it?"

The cook nodded.

"I've seen many a fine night in my time, especially at sea."

"You've been a sailor, have you?"

"Not exactly a sailor. I've served as cook aboard of several craft, and consequently I've seen a good part of the world. I've had my bumps, and the worst of them all

was when the brig General Jackson was wrecked and I was adrift for weeks with nothin' to eat for days before I was picked up, more dead than alive," said the cook, with a reminiscent look in his old eyes.

Fred asked him to tell him the story of the wreck, which he did, and then both turned in for the night.

CHAPTER III.

FIENDISH REVENGE.

Several weeks passed without any incident occurring to break in upon the usual monotonous routine of the lumber camp.

Fred made himself popular with the majority of the men by his eagerness to oblige all hands and his smart way in handling his duties as assistant to the cook.

McBee had little to say to him, which was a good sign, while Tulley noticed him only with a scowl.

The fireman, whether he had been impressed by the superintendent's remark at the supper table that night or not, attended to his duties in better shape than usual with him, though he maintained a surly deportment.

Fred had idle moments and these he employed to familiarize himself with the work done at the camp.

He saw how trees were cut down, denuded of the limbs and foliage, transported to the sawmill and cut into regular lengths.

The shore was piled with tiers of them, and preparations were under way to send a large number of them down the Penobscot in charge of men specially trained in the hazardous job.

One morning while the young lumber king was peeling potatoes for the midday meal Silas McBee suddenly appeared at the kitchen door.

He looked mad as a hornet.

"Drop that work, Drew, and go over to the engine-room. Report to Dobbs."

After jerking the words out in a peremptory tone, he turned on his heel and strode away.

Both the cook and Fred knew what was in the wind.

Tulley was drunk again and incapable of attending to his work.

"It's come at last," said Sol Scott, shaking his head dismally. "You've got to fire for the engineer to-day—maybe longer."

"I suppose it can't be helped," replied the boy, far from relishing the prospect ahead, not that he objected to the work, which would be much harder than what he was doing, but because it was likely to lead to trouble between him and Tulley.

Five minutes later he stood before Dobbs in the engine-room and his duties were explained to him.

He was to keep steam up to a certain point by feeding the furnace with refuse wood provided for the purpose, and attend to various odd jobs about the place.

He started in cheerfully and the engineer, after watching him for a while, nodded approvingly.

The morning passed quickly away to the young lumber king, who was somewhat interested in the novelty of his new work, and he was surprised when the noon whistle blew and the hands knocked off for dinner.

"You'll have to stay here in charge of the engine-room

till I come back," said the engineer to him, as he prepared to leave for the eating house. "Let the steam drop as far as this," he added, pointing to a figure on the gauge, "and keep it so. I've closed the draughts, so you oughtn't to have much to do."

Then the engineer departed in the rear of the other mill hands, and Fred was left the sole occupant of the building and its annex, where the engine and boiler stood.

He amused himself polishing the odd bits of brass work about the engine, and was thus engaged when a shadow suddenly obstructed the flow of sunlight that came through the doorway.

Fred turned around and, somewhat to his dismay, beheld the burly form of Tulley holding onto the door jamb for support, while the fireman's eyes shot forth a gleam that wasn't pleasant to look at.

"So, yer've got my job, have yer?" hissed the fireman.

"I've been put on it for the day, till you're ready to go on again," replied the boy, in a conciliatory tone.

"Ye're a liar!" roared Tulley; "ye're here for good!"

"I hope not," replied Fred. "I don't want your job."

"What did yer take it for, then?" snarled Tulley, venomously.

"Because I was ordered to."

"By Silas McBee, eh?"

"Yes."

The fireman uttered a string of imprecations.

He swayed to and fro in the doorway and muttered threats half aloud.

Then he turned on Fred again, staggering inside as far as the bench against the outer wall on which lay a collection of wrenches and other tools used by the engineer.

"Yer say yer don't want the job?" he said, thickly.

"I don't want it as long as you're around."

"Then git out. I'll attend to the business."

"I can't go till Mr. Dobbs lets me off."

"Oh, yer can't?" gritted Tulley.

"No. He left me in charge of the place and I've got to stay. He'll be back in twenty minutes or so, and then you can fix matters up with him."

"I kin, eh?" replied the fireman, with an ugly sneer. "I'm goin' to fix matters with you, not him. You're doin' my work, so if yer don't want a run-in with me, git out, and do it quick, d'ye understand?"

Fred realized that a crisis was at hand and he nerved himself to meet it.

At all risks he intended to stick to his post.

He wasn't looking for trouble, but he knew what his duty was, and intended to perform it or go under.

Therefore, he made no move to go, though Tulley's blood-shot eyes seemed to glare into his very soul.

"I'll give yer one minute to git," cried the drunken fireman.

"I'm not going," replied Fred, resolutely.

With a howl like an enraged wild animal Tulley turned partly around, grabbed a wrench and flung it at the boy's head.

His aim was pretty true and the distance so short that Fred's dodge was not effective.

Fortunately, the wooden handle, not the iron part, struck the boy a glancing blow on the forehead.

It was enough, however, to partially stun him, and he dropped to the floor.

Tulley looked at him, uncertain whether he had killed the lad or not.

Probably a dim foreboding of trouble ahead took possession of the fireman's brain.

He had killed a man some months before in a saloon fight in Augusta, and he knew what it was to flee for his life.

He also knew that he was in bad standing with McBee and most of the men.

If he had murdered the boy in his fury he might be lynched off-hand, for justice in the backwoods is often as swift and certain as it formerly was in the wild and woolly West, and still is for that matter in some places.

In his boozy condition he could not tell whether Fred was dead or not.

He looked down and out, at any rate.

Tulley's first impulse, therefore, was to fly the camp and take his chances in the wilderness.

As he turned to the door, however, a sudden thought flashed through his brain.

The engine-room and mill were silent and untenanted, and would be for nearly half an hour longer.

Why not set the place afire and destroy the evidence of his crime?

The scheme appealed to him, for it promised him additional revenge against McBee and the bunch who were down on him.

He threw open the furnace door and grabbed the long ash hoe, intending to pull out the burning wood and scatter it about the floor.

Suddenly his purpose changed.

A diabolical grin came over his ugly features.

A new idea had struck him.

Instead of hauling out the fire he dropped the long iron implement and began to pile in the wood till not another stick would go in.

Then he opened all the draughts and the fire began to roar.

Tulley grinned more fiendishly than ever.

He reeled to the doorway and looked toward the eating house.

No one was in sight, and Sol Scott was hustling around the table waiting on the men, who wondered where the new boy was.

Then he looked at the steam gauge and saw the shivering finger climb up the index.

He grabbed a bit of twine and tied down the safety valve.

That would prevent the automatic apparatus from working and letting off excess steam.

Finally he got a piece of rope, tied the boy's arms behind his back, and raised him up and secured him to a brass rail that ran around the side of the boiler.

He knew the boiler was an old one and would not stand with safety more than a certain number of pounds of steam to the cubic inch.

With the safety valve out of business the danger point would soon be reached under the hot fire he had made, and then when the pressure exceeded the power of resistance the boiler was bound to explode and blow the boy into eternity if he wasn't already dead.

The buildings would then probably be finished by fire, and all evidence that he had had a hand in the destruction of the premises would be wiped out.

The blame would rest on the dead lad as an inexperienced factor in the case.

Shoving in more wood and after taking a last look at the gauge to make sure that things were working toward the end he aimed at, Tulley staggered out of the annex engine-room and reeled away toward the nearby woods, leaving Fred Drew and the property of the lumber company to their fate.

CHAPTER IV.

SAVED IN THE NICK OF TIME.

Fred had not been entirely unconscious of what was going on in the engine-room as the rum-crazed fireman moved around while carrying out his diabolical project.

He was dazed and unable to move, like one in a nightmare, but he dimly understood that Tulley was up to some mischief.

When the rascal tied his arms and then his body to the brass railing the boy began to feel that some horrible deed was in contemplation.

His mind, however, was fast clearing, and when Tulley, with a horrible chuckle, vanished through the doorway, he came around and began to struggle to free himself.

He heard the roar of the furnace as the open draughts sent the air through the glowing wood, and he felt the increased heat of the boiler behind him.

He knew that steam was generating fast in the tubes, but he did not surmise that he and his surroundings were face to face with a great peril until his eyes rested on the automatic safety valve.

Then his startled senses took in the fact that it was tied down to prevent the escape of the steam.

He knew enough about steam engines to understand what that meant.

He could see by the gauge that the pressure was mounting fast, and at that moment was a little above the usual mark at which the engineer kept it when the machinery of the mill was in action.

"Good Lord!" gasped Fred. "The scoundrel has loaded the furnace, opened the draughts and fastened down the safety valve. Unless I can get free in a few minutes the pressure is bound to become so heavy that the boiler will explode and blow me and the building to thunder. What a villain Tulley is!"

The young lumber king, alive to the urgency of the moment, and that his own fate hung in the balance, struggled desperately to free himself from his bonds.

The growing heat of the boiler behind him, from which he was only separated by about a foot, was already becoming too uncomfortable for him, and yet his thoughts were not on that, but on the more serious state of the case.

As the moments flew by and he failed to release himself he began to shout at the top of his voice for help.

There was no one about to hear him.

Providence, however, sent Sol Scott to the door of the kitchen at that moment.

The cook heard faint cries coming from the direction of the engine-room.

He knew Fred was alone there and instantly it occurred to him that Tulley had gone there and attacked him.

Seizing a big carving knife from the kitchen table, he started for the sawmill on the jump, fully determined to make things hot for the fireman.

Every moment Fred's cries became plainer to him as he drew nearer the door of the engine-room.

The tone of the boy's voice showed him that the lad stood in urgent need of help.

"I believe the villain is tryin' to murder the boy," he breathed, tensely. "I'll fix him. I'll jab a hole in him big-enough to let in the daylight good and strong."

Sol Scott was not a gory-minded person by nature.

In fact, he was rather timid than otherwise.

But he had taken a strong liking for Fred Drew, and the very idea that the boy might be at the mercy of such a scoundrel as Dave Tulley enraged him, and made him reckless of consequences.

As he neared the door he uttered a wild Comanche-like whoop, thinking to strike fear into the mind of the fireman, whom he believed was assaulting Fred.

The young lumber king heard the shout and yelled louder.

A moment later Sol Scott dashed into the engine-room with the carving-knife poised ready for business.

"Where is he? Where is the scoundrel?" he roared, seeing Fred standing by himself and no sign of the fireman on the premises.

"For Heaven's sake! Cut me loose—quick!" cried Fred, appealingly.

"What's the matter?" asked the cook, not comprehending the situation.

"Cut me loose! I'm tied to this brass rail. Don't waste a second!"

Fred's desperate earnestness had its effect on Scott, and he rushed over to the boy and cut his bonds.

Seizing the knife out of the cook's hands, and pushing him back, Fred made a leap for the safety valve and cut the string which held it down.

The moment it was free the steam began to escape in a cloud.

Fred then pulled the whistle rope and a shrill screech echoed and re-echoed across the landscape, startling both the engineer and the men who were finishing their meal.

"Hold that rope, Sol," cried Fred, feverishly, "and keep the whistle going."

"Why, what's wrong?" asked the cook.

"No matter; I'll tell you later," ejaculated the boy, rushing around and closing the draughts.

The wild screaming of the whistle had the whole camp aroused by this time.

The engineer, suspecting something was wrong, was running toward the engine-room, and half the hands, seeing his excitement, followed his example.

Silas McBee came to the door of a cabin near the water, where he had been doing some work in connection with the shipment of the consignment of logs down the river, and looked toward the sawmill.

"Let go the rope," said Fred to Scott, and the whistle stopped suddenly.

The gauge was now dropping slowly, and the boy knew

that a catastrophe had been averted through the instrumentality of the cook.

"Sol," he said, grasping the man by the hand, "you've saved my life and the sawmill as well."

"How—how?" asked the astonished cook.

Before Fred could answer the engineer bounced into the place.

"What in thunder is wrong?" he demanded, looking around.

"Nothing now, sir; but a few minutes ago things looked mighty shaky for both me and the engine-room," replied Fred.

"Explain yourself," said Dobbs, sharply, as a bunch of hands gathered around the door and looked curiously inside.

Fred did explain, and in a very graphic manner.

He showed the pieces of string still adhering to the arm of the escape valve; he pointed to the gauge, which showed a high pressure yet, and lastly he opened the furnace door and let the engineer see the roaring fire in there.

Dobbs comprehended the matter and was boiling mad.

"If Silas McBee doesn't run that scoundrel Tulley out of the camp I'll resign my job," he said. "Why, he might have put the mill out of business for the season, without speaking about taking your life."

"He ought to be lynched," cried one of the men at the door, and a murmur of approval ran through the crowd, for most of those present were down on the fireman.

"Well," said Fred, "you have Sol Scott to thank for saving the place and I have got to thank him for saving my life. If he hadn't come just when he did you'd have had excitement to burn here by this time, while I would have been out of all of my earthly troubles."

"Three cheers for Sol!" cried one of the men.

They were given with a will, for Sol was something of a favorite in camp.

"What started you up here, Sol?" asked the engineer.

The cook explained that he had gone to the door for a breath of cool air, and he then heard faint cries coming from the engine-room apparently.

"I suspected Tulley had gone to the place, and finding Drew alone had attacked him, because he was holding down his job. So I grabbed this knife and started to save the boy, not understanding what really was the matter," concluded Scott.

Dobbs told the cook that he deserved a gold medal for what he had done, and he guessed the boss would make it all right with him.

"As for you, Drew, you had a mighty narrow escape. McBee, I promise you, will see that Tulley doesn't monkey with you any more. In fact, if the men catch him he may swing to the limb of one of those trees yonder. If I could have had my way he'd have gone long ago. You may consider that you have a steady job in the engine-room now for the rest of the season, and I guess there'll be no reason why you can't come back next year if you want to," said Dobbs.

He then told Fred to go and get his dinner, and take his time.

So the boy and his good friend, the cook, started for the kitchen and eating house together, better friends than ever.

CHAPTER V.

THE NOCTURNAL VISITOR.

When Silas McBee came to get his dinner he found Fred at the table.

"What was the trouble at the saw mill?" he inquired.

Fred told him the whole story.

McBee swore lustily as he realized what might have happened through the agency of the drunken fireman.

"I hope the men catch and string him up," he said, in a tone that showed he meant what he said.

Then he called Scott into the room.

"You shall be rewarded for saving the engine and the mill," he said. "As for you, Drew, Tulley's job and his wages are yours from this time out."

Fred was sorry to sever his connection with the culinary department for Sol's sake, but otherwise he was glad to make the change.

"Never mind," he thought, "I'll help him out evenings. He saved my life and I can't do too much for him to show my gratitude."

Fred's back was blistered and raw and was now paining him a great deal.

When he told Sol about it, the cook made him take off his shirt, and then Scott rubbed him well with sweet oil, which helped him greatly, and he returned to his work, feeling fairly good.

A hunt had been made for Tulley in the neighborhood, but the long screech of the whistle had told him that his scheme had failed, and, knowing he might expect to be roughly handled by the men if caught, he hid himself in a certain place where he believed he would be safe, so the searchers did not discover him.

After the whistle blew that afternoon for work to stop the engineer remained with Fred to show him what he was expected to do hereafter himself.

They went to supper together, and after the meal the young lumber king insisted on helping Sol wash the dishes and set the table for the morning.

"I'm much obliged to you, sonny," said Scott, "but you ain't obliged to put yourself out for me. When your work is through at the engine-room you're done for the day."

"I know that, Sol, but just the same I'm going to give you a lift right along, if you don't object," replied Fred. "I suppose I can keep on sleeping here, for I'd rather do it than bunk in with the rest of the crowd."

"Of course you can, as long as I have anythin' to say about it," replied the cook, heartily.

That evening they sat by the door together, and Sol spun several more sea yarns that interested Fred greatly.

The moon was coming up when they turned in, and by that time the camp was as silent as a country churchyard.

It might have been two in the morning when a dark shadow came out of the woods and moved stealthily toward the cook house and its connecting buildings.

Silas McBee didn't consider it necessary to employ a night watchman in that out-of-the-way locality, so there was no eye to observe the movements of the man as he crossed the moonlit ground, with the slouching gait which any of the hands would immediately have recognized as belonging to Dave Tulley, the ex-fireman.

Tulley reached the cook house and stopped under the shadow of the window.

Hunger had driven him from his lair, just as it drives wild animals abroad to look for a meal.

He knew that the provisions were kept in a storehouse next to and connected with the kitchen, and his purpose was to make a raid on the building.

He also knew that Sol Scott and Fred Drew slept in the little room between the kitchen and the storehouse.

He would like to have done several things to Fred, seeing that the boy had in some way balked him of his revenge; but he was sober now, and the risk of getting square with the lad was too great for him to seriously consider the matter.

The question of appeasing his hunger and securing supplies for the future was what chiefly occupied his thoughts.

The storeroom had a window, and it was on this that Tulley began operations with a stout chisel he had brought for the purpose.

He did not expect to find the window a difficult proposition to overcome, for Sol Scott did not look for any surreptitious visits from the men at night, because they were well fed, and therefore had no call to seek extra provender; therefore a simple catch was all he considered necessary to hold the window.

Tulley made short work of the catch and opened the window.

With the aid of a box he pulled himself into the storeroom, and then in the semi-gloom of the place he began to feel around and examine the articles on the shelves.

He loaded a bag with canned goods, boxes of crackers, and other things, and dropped it out of the window.

Part of a haunch of venison attracted his attention, and his hunger made him attack it on the premises, tearing off chunks like a famished wolf might do.

While he was thus engaged the young lumber king, whose bunk was against the wall of the storeroom, woke up.

It was a most unusual circumstance for the boy to wake during the night.

Once he got to sleep he usually remained unconscious of his surroundings until morning.

A bad dream, occasioned probably by his day's strenuous experience in the engine-room, was the cause of his waking up.

As he turned over to compose himself to sleep again his sharp ears heard what he regarded as suspicious sounds in the storeroom.

At first he thought it was Sol moving around in there, but the reflection of the moonlight through the window showed the cook sleeping tranquilly in his bunk on the opposite side of the room.

Fred listened attentively until he was satisfied some one who had no business to be there was moving around in the storeroom.

He sprang noiselessly out of bed, went to the door and opened it softly.

The open window first met his gaze, and then the figure of a man standing between himself and the moonlight.

Naturally he was astonished to find an intruder there at that hour, but he was not long in identifying the individual as Dave Tulley, his personal enemy.

The ex-fireman was attacking the cold meat in a ravenous way that showed how hungry he was.

Had it been any one else, some tramp of the wilderness, for instance, the boy would have sympathized with the purport of his clandestine visit to the storeroom.

It was different in the case of Tulley.

The rascal had tried to murder him that day in a particularly diabolical way, consequently the young lumber king entertained no kindly feelings toward him.

The villain richly deserved to be punished for his attempted crime, and here was a chance to capture him and hand him over to Silas McBee.

Throwing open the door suddenly, he rushed into the storeroom and seized the rascal tightly by one arm.

"Surrender, Dave Tulley," he cried. "I've caught you."

Tulley was taken somewhat by surprise, but was not wholly thrown off his guard.

Instead of submitting to what seemed to be his fate, he turned on Fred and grabbed him by the neck.

Then ensued a desperate struggle between them for the mastery.

They swayed to and fro for a few minutes and then went down on the floor with a crash, continuing their fight in the gloom.

The noise awoke Sol Scott, and he sat bolt upright in bed.

The racket in the storeroom then came plainly to his ears.

Glancing across at Fred's bunk, he saw that the boy was not in bed, and he at once concluded that his young friend was in trouble again.

He lost no time in getting out of bed and going to the door of the storeroom.

Two forms, one dark and the other clad in a light, airy attire, were squirming about on the floor.

Sol hastened to light the lamp with which the sleeping room was provided, and with this in his hand he illuminated the scene of the struggle.

Tulley, owing to his superior strength, had secured an advantageous position on top of Fred, and was in the act of bringing a plate down on the lad's head, when Sol caught his wrist.

The rascal looked up and the cook at once recognized him.

"Dave Tulley!" he exclaimed.

With an imprecation Tulley sprang to his feet, dashed the lamp from the cook's hands and sprang for the window.

He went through the opening head foremost, turning like an athlete on a horizontal bar, and landed on the ground outside in a heap.

He quickly picked himself up, grabbed the bagful of plunder and dashed for the woods.

It was useless for Fred to think of following him in his undress attire, while Scott was busy looking after the lamp, the chimney of which had been broken into a hundred fragments.

Fred watched the rascal disappear into the woods and then closed the window.

He found that the catch was broken and that it could not be fastened.

As it opened inward, he piled a couple of boxes up against it, and then he and Scott returned to the sleeping

room, where Fred told the cook how he had discovered Tulley in the storeroom, and attempted unsuccessfully to capture him.

When he finished his story they turned in and slept without further interruption till morning.

CHAPTER VI.

IN A TIGHT FIX.

When Silas McBee learned next morning the particulars of Tulley's nocturnal visit to the storeroom he got hopping mad.

He immediately detailed a number of the men to scour the woods after the rascal.

They spent several hours at the job, but failed to find any signs of the ex-fireman.

And yet Tulley was not far away at the time.

His retreat was within half a mile of the saw-mill, and he was aware of the efforts being made to capture him.

Several days passed and nothing having been seen of Tulley, the impression prevailed that he had left the neighborhood.

Fred's activity and attention to his duties made him solid with the engineer, and they got on very well together.

The boy's growing popularity in the camp, however, made enemies for him of several men who had been cronies of Tulley.

The ex-fireman had supplied these chaps with whisky on the sly, though he never would admit to them where he got the stuff, and the banishment of Tulley cut off this surreptitious supply.

For that reason they sympathized with the rascal, though they had no real friendship for him, and accumulated a grouch against the new boy.

Their first move was to try to set the rest of the men against Fred, but finding this plan wouldn't work at all, they fell back on underhand methods.

They determined to set McBee against him.

If they could accomplish this they felt sure that the superintendent would send the lad off, though what they expected to gain by getting Fred bounced from the camp was a problem.

One morning McBee looked into the engine-room and called Fred out.

"Come with me," he said in his customary gruff tone. He led the boy to his quarters in the front of the mill.

"Clean up things around here," he said.

The young lumber king got a broom and swept the sleeping room and office out to begin with.

Then he began to dust the shelves and their contents and tidy the place up.

When he got through it presented quite a new and improved appearance.

He had just finished his work when the superintendent looked in and grunted his approval.

Then he looked up and went off, while Fred returned to the engine-room.

Two of Tulley's cronies worked in the mill and they noticed what the boy had been doing in McBee's quarters.

They also noticed that the window in the superintendent's bed-room had been left open by Fred.

Noon came around and on their way to dinner they held a consultation.

They hurried through the meal and were the first to leave the eating-room.

A few minutes afterward they were standing under the window in question.

Fred was in the engine-room waiting for Dobbs to return and let him off, but he didn't notice that any one was around the mill.

One of the men boosted the other through the window and then stood on watch outside, ready to warn his companion if any one approached.

The man inside, whose name was Reedy, stayed in McBee's quarters about ten minutes, and then let himself out of the window, closing it after him.

The pair walked away, and a quarter of an hour later Fred was relieved by the engineer and he went to get his own dinner.

During the afternoon Reedy found an excuse for going into the engine-room.

Neither Dobbs nor Fred took particular note of his actions.

While he was there the boy wheeled a barrow full of ashes to a dump outside.

Fred's brief absence gave Reedy the opportunity he was looking for to reach the lad's coat, which hung from a peg on the wall back of the boiler.

As the young lumber king was returning he met Reedy at the door going away.

After supper the group of Tully's cronies met on the bank of the river and held a pow-wow.

The communication Reedy made to them seemed to afford them much satisfaction.

Finally they all returned to the neighborhood of the kitchen and hung around smoking.

Fred was helping Sol with the dishes as usual and set the table for morning.

When Sol and the boy finished up they came to the door, the cook getting out his pipe, which was his one great solace.

Suddenly all the men except Reedy walked forward and seemed to be greatly interested in something they saw down near the river.

Their actions attracted the attention of Fred and Sol, and they went over and asked the men what they were looking at.

One of the men pointed at a certain spot and asked the cook and the boy to watch and they'd see something odd in a minute.

Fred looked intently at the place and so did Sol, but nothing happened.

While they were thus engaged Reedy sneaked into the kitchen and thence to the small sleeping apartment beyond.

He was gone only a few minutes and then joined the crowd and asked what they were looking at.

"Some of us saw a strange kind of light down yonder on the other side of the river," said a fellow named Wagner; "but it hasn't shone again, though we've all been watchin' for it."

"What was it like?" asked Reedy with a grin.

That was the signal agreed upon between him and the rest that everything was all right.

Wagner explained that it was a ghostly kind of light with a halo around it.

Reedy laughed and said he guessed it was only imagination.

The men then walked away, while Fred and the cook returned to the kitchen door.

When McBee went to his quarters about four o'clock next day he found under the door a folded piece of paper addressed to him.

When he read it his brow clouded.

He went to his desk and looked at it sharply.

The drawer in which he kept quite a sum of money showed signs of having been tampered with.

On trying it he found the lock had been broken with some kind of an implement.

Pulling the drawer out he discovered that the fancy buckskin wallet containing the money was gone.

Nothing else appeared to be missing as far as he could see.

McBee was a man of strong prejudices and easily excited to anger.

He acted entirely on impulse, never stopping to think whether he was right or not.

When his feelings were excited against any one he was apt to carry things to an unreasonable length, and to allow the object of his resentment little chance to square himself.

On this occasion his face, which was a sure index to his state of mind, showed that he was aroused to a high pitch of wrath.

The paper he held in his hand he crunched between his fingers and threw away.

Slamming the door of his office he marched straight to the cook-house.

Walking through the kitchen, without a word to Sol, who was peeling a pan of potatoes, he entered the bedroom and began to pull Fred's bunk over.

Snugly hidden under the mattress he found his fancy buckskin wallet.

He uttered a terrible imprecation that reached Sol's ears and made that worthy wonder what was up.

Opening the wallet, he found that the money, amounting to about \$200, was missing.

He swore like a trooper.

Putting the wallet in his pocket he stalked out into the air and returned to his quarters, where he picked up a small coil of rope.

Going to the engine-house door he called to the young lumber king.

"Put on your jacket and come with me," he said in an ugly tone.

The boy obeyed, and without a word the superintendent led him away from the camp and up on the bluff which bordered upon the river to a spot where a gang of men were felling trees.

On the edge of the bluff stood a tall dead tree which had been left there as a kind of landmark.

"Now, then," gritted McBee, pushing Fred against the tree, "turn out your pockets."

"What!" gasped the boy, amazed at the order.

"Turn out your pockets, d'y'e hear?" he repeated savagely.

"Turn out my pockets?" fluttered Fred. "Why——"

"Wagner," roared the superintendent to one of the gang, "come here."

The man obeyed, while the others stopped work, wondering what was in the wind.

"Turn out that boy's pockets—every one of them," cried McBee.

Smothering a grin, for Wagner knew what was coming, being one of the conspirators, he proceeded to carry out the boss's orders.

Nothing came of the search until Wagner came to the inside pocket of Fred's coat, and from this he drew forth a \$10 bill which had been torn in quarters and then pasted together with two narrow strips of red paper, making the outline of a red cross.

McBee recognized the bill as one that had been in the buckskin wallet.

He glared furiously at Fred.

"Is that all he's got about him?" he demanded of Wagner.

"That's all," answered the rascal.

"What did you do with the rest of the money?" he said to the boy in tones of suppressed fury.

"The rest of the money!" ejaculated Fred, who could not understand how the marked bill had come upon his person.

"The rest of the \$200 you stole from my desk," replied the superintendent.

"I never stole a cent from your desk. I'm not a thief," answered Fred with a ring of indignation in his tones.

"You didn't, eh? P'haps you'll tell me how this wallet came to be in your bunk? I found it there."

McBee held the wallet up threateningly.

"I don't know anything about it. I didn't put it there. I never saw it before," protested Fred.

The superintendent threw the rope on the ground at Wagner's feet.

"Tie that a couple of times around that young liar's chest and pin his arms to his body," he said.

Wagner obeyed with alacrity.

"Now take the end with you and climb half-way up this tree."

The man did as he was told.

"Haul the boy up and secure him there."

Wagner was a burly fellow, and had no trouble in carrying out the order.

"Now, you young villain, tell me where the rest of that money is or there'll be somethin' doin' you won't like," snarled McBee.

"I don't know anything about the money you're talking about," replied Fred desperately.

"Get your axe, Wagner," said the superintendent sharply.

The man got it while the rest of the gang looked on with wondering eyes.

"Notch that tree out on the river side," directed McBee.

Wagner proceeded to cut away, and not another word was said until he had made a deep V-shaped cut as far as the center of the tree, when McBee called a halt.

"Now, you young thief, confess what you have done with that \$200 or over into the river you go," said the boss of the camp.

"I can't tell you anything about the money, for I never

saw it," answered the boy in a tone that had the ring of truth to it.

McBee, however, didn't believe him even a little bit.

Finding his wallet in Fred's bunk was evidence enough to him that the boy was guilty, and nothing the lad could say would convince him otherwise.

"All right," snapped McBee grimly, "we'll see."

With those words he ordered Wagner to complete the job.

The man at once attacked the opposite side of the tree, each lusty stroke widening the fresh notch.

Bound helpless to the tree, Fred could feel the jar made by each stroke of the axe.

"You'll soon be sailin' down toward the rapids," laughed Silas McBee sardonically, as the tree began to tilt over toward the river.

Fred, alive to the seriousness of his situation, begged the superintendent to explain what it all meant.

McBee only laughed at him.

At length when it looked as if another stroke of the axe would complete the work, McBee stopped Wagner.

"This is your last chance to confess," he said. "Own up about the money and I'll let you down. Refuse and—"

Fred made an involuntary movement of terror, for he felt the tree sagging under him inch by inch.

The move was unfortunate.

It proved to be the last straw with the tree.

Whether McBee really intended to launch him over, or simply meant to frighten him into a confession, is uncertain—probably the latter, for the boy's possible death would prevent him from recovering the money, anyway.

However, he had carried his purpose a little too far, for the tree suddenly went over with a crash, snapped off at the weak point, and disappeared down the bluff like a shot, carrying the young lumber king with it.

CHAPTER VII.

ADRIFT ON THE RIVER.

The other members of the chopping gang uttered a shout of dismay.

Until that moment they had not believed that McBee meant to carry matters so far.

They would have entered a protest anyway, but were afraid of the boss of the camp.

Now they rushed to the edge of the bluff in a body and looked down.

McBee and Wagner were already standing close to the brink, gazing after the tree, which had struck the water with a splash, and after going under had come up and was sailing out into the center of the stream.

Fortunately the tree had fallen in a way that broke the effect of the shock on Fred, and though he was momentarily dazed, his bonds had become loosened.

The current of the river carried tree and boy around a bend and vanished from the sight of the watchers on the bluff.

McBee's anger cooled some as he began to realize that he might be held responsible for the lad's death, so he issued orders to his men to get down the bluff and save the victim of his reckless rage.

The men, Wagner excepted, had to run some little distance back before they could find a place where they could descend the bluff with safety.

Reaching the shore, they followed the river at their best speed till they came to the turn, when they were blocked by a big stone that lay right in their path.

By the time they had surmounted this it was growing dark, but they kept on, with their eyes on the lookout for the runaway tree.

After proceeding for a good half mile they failed to sight it.

At this point the river widened out, and the trend of the tide carried objects well toward the other shore.

The duskiness of the air cut off their range of vision, and after going another quarter of a mile they had to give the quest up as a bad job.

"The boy is gone, I'm afraid," said one of them. "It's all McBee's fault, and I wouldn't care to be in his shoes. I don't believe Fred Drew stole his money. It is just like the boss to go off half-cocked when he gets his dander up."

The bunch was to a man friendly toward the young fireman, and McBee's ears ought to have tingled from what they said about him on their way back.

In the meanwhile, how fared it with the young lumber king?

The moment he recovered his self-possession he struggled to free himself from the rope that held him.

This was not such a difficult matter, for a thick, spreading limb above his head kept the tree nicely balanced, and prevented it from rolling in either direction.

The rope was loose, as the shock of the descent from the bluff had thrown him toward the notch around which the rope had been thrown.

All he had to do was to draw out his arms and lift the loop over his head, then he was free of restraint.

He sat up with his legs astride his wooden steed and looked around.

He found himself all of sixty feet from the shore whence he had come and steadily drifting toward the opposite bank.

The water was like ice and chilled him through, while the temperature of the air was also cold.

Finding that the log was as steady as a raft, he stood up on it, walked as far forward as the distended limb, which acted the same way that a floating boom does for a small boat in a gale, and began to flap his arms across his chest to keep his blood in circulation.

Darkness gradually came over the face of the landscape and the air grew colder still.

His situation was one not to be envied.

He was going straight down the river through a perfect wilderness, without anything in sight to satisfy an appetite that was already making itself felt.

He had been two hours on the tree, and was beginning to feel as if he didn't care whether school kept or not, when he spied through the gloom ahead a twinkling light that grew steadily larger and brighter.

In the course of another half hour he made it out to be a fire close to the river.

Fred welcomed the sight joyfully.

Where there was a fire there must be human beings, and the presence of human life suggested shelter and something to eat.

But how was he to reach the fire unless he plunged into the icy stream and swam ashore?

He would do that sooner than be carried past what promised to be a haven of refuge for him.

Fred made out two figures seated before the fire.

One of them seemed to be a boy from his size.

The blaze now revealed to him the presence of a small pleasure sloop anchored close in to the shore.

The current was carrying the tree close in toward it, and the young lumber king judged that he was nearing a point of land that jutted into the river.

The night was comparatively still, and the involuntary voyager thought he would try and attract the attention of the strangers.

So making a funnel of his two hands, he shouted, "Hilloa!"

His voice reached the persons seated on the stump.

They started up and looked in the darkness riverward.

"Hilloa!" cried Fred again.

The smaller person ran down to the edge of the stream and shouted, "Hi, hi! Where are you?" in a boyish voice.

"Here—on a floating tree. Have you a row boat?" replied Fred.

The boy vanished out of range of the fire and presently Fred heard the sound of oars.

"This way," he cried, shouting to guide the rower.

The boat and its occupant became dimly visible.

They were coming direct for the tree.

In a few minutes the rower took in one oar and the boat ranged alongside of the forest derelict.

"Step in," invited the boy.

Fred stooped, grabbed the side of the boat and leaped in.

"How came you to be on that tree?" asked the boy. "Are you one of the loggers?"

"No, I'm not exactly a logger, though I came from a logging camp some miles above here. As to why I happened to be on that tree, I'll explain by and by, after I warm myself, for I am chilled to the bone, and hungry enough to eat any old thing in the shape of food."

"What's your name?" asked the other, rowing shoreward.

"Fred Drew. What's yours?"

"Billy Watkins."

"Who's the man ashore?"

"Professor Aldwinkle."

"Any other besides you two?"

"Nope."

"What brings you and the professor into these wilds?"

"He's a naturalist and is looking for specimens. I'm boatman, cook and general assistant."

The boat grounded, and Billy Watkins, followed by Fred, jumped to the shore.

The former secured the boat and then led the way to the fire.

"How do you do, sir?" said Fred, rushing close to the fire, and addressing the professor. "I'm almost frozen. I've been in the river and feel like a lump of ice."

"Don't stand on ceremony, then, young man. I'll talk to you after you get the chill off. I think a horn of cognac would do you good and drive the cold out. Billy!"

"Yes, sir."

"Get the bottle of brandy from my locker and fetch a glass with you."

Billy ran to the sloop, which was anchored to the land, jumped aboard of her and vanished into the little cabin.

He was back in a jiffy with the bottle and a glass.

While he was away the young lumber king told the professor that he hadn't eaten anything since noon.

"Billy," said Professor Aldwinkle, taking the bottle and glass out of his hand, "make a pot of coffee, and lay out some bread and butter and cold venison."

"Yes, sir," and the youth was off aboard the sloop once more.

He brought an oil stove forth, set it on top of the trunk roof of the cabin, and soon had a small brass kettle full of water heating over one of the burners.

While he was thus engaged Fred introduced himself to the professor, and as he thawed out under the combined influence of the fire and the brandy he told his story, roughly sketching his brief connection with the logging camp, but dwelling upon his sudden and unjust ejectment therefrom via the chopped tree and the river.

Fred's honest face and earnest tones carried with them a conviction of his truthfulness, and Professor Aldwinkle believed him.

"You were treated very shabbily, my lad," said the professor. "It was very fortunate for you that I and my assistant happened to be here, ready to help you out. The nearest town is on the other side of the river beyond Lake Parmedecook, about twenty miles as the crow flies, but all of fifty or more if you tried to walk there. Without food you must have perished miserably in the wilderness."

By this time Billy yelled out that the coffee and other fixings were ready on the table, so the professor told Fred to go aboard and eat all he wanted.

The young lumber king didn't require a second invitation.

He was soon seated at the small table in the cabin of the sloop.

Billy poured out the coffee.

"That will warm your innards," said Billy. "Gee! You looked like a wreck when you first came to the fire."

"And I felt like a wreck, too. The brandy and the fire fixed me up pretty good and this layout completes the cure. That coffee tastes good, I can tell you. I guess you're a good cook, Billy."

"There are worse, but I haven't met 'em," grinned the youth.

The professor came aboard about the time Fred had satisfied his appetite.

"Billy," he said, "you'll have to let our visitor have your bunk to-night. You can sling your hammock and make yourself comfortable with a pair of blankets."

"Yes, sir," replied the youth cheerfully.

"I don't want Billy to put himself out on my account," said Fred. "If you have a hammock it will be good enough for me."

"Ho!" ejaculated Billy. "You hain't puttin' me out any. I kin sleep anywhere. I'm used to roughin' it. I've slept in packin' cases, waggins and any old place before I got a job on the sloop."

Professor Aldwinkle told Fred to strip to the skin and get under the blankets right away, and he did.

The fire ashore had by this time died away to a mass of glowing embers.

The professor turned in himself, leaving his assistant to hang up the hammock to the four hooks in the cabin ceiling.

Fred felt pretty comfortable now, but the strangeness of his surroundings kept him awake until after his companions were asleep.

While he was wondering how Sol Scott had taken his unexpected departure from the camp, he drifted into slumberland, and until the morning sun had brought light and warmth into the landscape once more no sound was heard in the little cabin but the deep breathing of the three sleepers.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MAN ON THE SHORE.

When Fred opened his eyes in the morning Billy's hammock had disappeared and the little cabin was flooded with sunshine which came through the sliding door that communicated with the cockpit.

The narrow little table was set for three persons, and everything about the place looked as neat as a new pin.

The professor was still asleep in the opposite berth. Fred hopped out of bed, but couldn't find his clothes. Even his undershirt was missing.

Wrapping a blanket around him he stepped to the door to look for Billy.

That youth was seated on the shore in front of the three-burner oil stove, cooking breakfast.

"Hello, Billy, where are my clothes?" asked Fred.

"Spread out in the sun on the roof of the cabin. I'll get 'em for you," answered the lad.

He jumped aboard the boat and handed Fred his things, one by one.

The professor was now awake.

"Good-morning, my young friend," he said to Fred, as he rose and proceeded to don his garments. "I trust you slept well last night."

"Good-morning, Professor Aldwinkle," replied Fred. "Yes, sir, I slept like a top."

Billy Watkins, seeing that his employer was up, began bringing in the breakfast, which consisted of fried bacon and eggs, raw fried potatoes and coffee. There was also buttered toast made out of a stale loaf, and crackers.

The trio sat down to the meal and ate it with a relish, the professor declaring that since he had been out in the wilds everything tasted good to him, and he had never felt better in his life.

"I suppose you have no desire to return to the logging camp," said the professor, looking at Fred.

"No, sir; I'm through with that place. I've had all the experience I want with Superintendent McBee. The only person there I regret parting from is the cook, Sol Scott. He was an eccentric old chap, but he was true blue. He saved my life on one occasion, and I shall always feel grateful to him."

Fred then told Professor Aldwinkle and Billy the story of his run-in with Dave Tulley in the engine-room, which probably would have ended in a tragedy but for the fortunate intervention of Scott.

The professor said he was about to return down the river to Bangor, where he had hired Billy and the sloop, and he would take Fred along if he wanted to go.

This suited our hero exactly.

"I gladly accept your invitation, Professor Aldwinkle, and if I can make myself useful in any way en route I hope you will call upon me," he replied.

"Good enough," cried Billy. "Give me a lift with the anchor, will you?"

"Sure, I will," replied Fred, springing on the roof of the cabin and going forward to the bows.

Leaving Fred to finish turning the drum that hoisted the small anchor, Billy ran up the jib and then the main-sail.

The sloop floated off into the middle of the stream.

As soon as the anchor was aboard and secured, the Bangor youth took his place at the tiller and headed the craft down the river.

The wind was light, so the boat didn't make very rapid progress.

The young lumber king enjoyed the novelty of the sail very much indeed.

He also enjoyed the professor's conversation, which related chiefly to the experiences of his trip up the river, and his rather unsuccessful search for specimens.

"What do you think of doing after you reach Bangor?" he asked Fred.

"Go to work in a lumber yard as soon as I can find a job, sir."

"I have a friend in the lumber business there. I will introduce you to him. I have no doubt he may be able to put you to work in his yard."

"Thank you, sir."

At that moment the boat was hailed from the shore.

A rough-looking man was standing near the water, making signs for them to come over that way.

"Head the boat over, Billy," said Professor Aldwinkle. "We'll see what he wants."

As the sloop drew near the bank Fred noticed a familiar look about the man.

In a few minutes he recognized the fellow as Dave Tulley.

"That's the rascal who tied me to the boiler in the engine-room and left me face to face with certain death. For that he was obliged to fly the camp. He's a dangerous scoundrel, and I advise you to have nothing to do with him," he said to the professor.

"I don't think I'd care to have such a person aboard this boat," replied the naturalist, "but at the same time if he's lost in these wilds, and in danger of starvation, it would be a crime to abandon him."

"That's true," admitted Fred reluctantly; "but I warn you he is not to be trusted. If you should take him as a passenger you want to get rid of him as soon as you can, and while he's aboard he ought to be watched."

"What do you want, my man?" asked Professor Aldwinkle, as soon as the boat was within easy talking distance of the shore.

"I'm lost and famished for want of somethin' to eat," replied Tulley in a whining tone. "I want yer to take me down the river a bit. If yer leave me here I'll never git out alive."

"We're rather crowded for room," replied the professor. "If we give you some food can't you get on yourself?"

"Naw, I couldn't. I'd only wander 'round till the grub gave out and then I'd turn up my toes," replied Tulley in a very unamiable tone.

"How long have you been on your way?"

"About three days."

"Where did you come from?"

"A loggin' camp up river."

"Why did you leave the place and start out on such a reckless jaunt?"

"The superintendent and me didn't hitch. I couldn't stand bein' made a slave of, so I lit out."

During the conversation Fred kept his face hidden as much as possible, so that Tulley didn't recognize him.

"Was there a boy at your camp named Fred Drew?" asked the professor.

The rascal gave a start and looked uneasy.

"Naw," he replied after a pause; "never heard of him."

"Isn't your name Dave Tulley?"

The fellow uttered a gasp of surprise and showed some signs of consternation.

"Isn't that your name?" repeated the professor.

"What if it is? How come yer to know me? I never seen yer afore."

"I've got a passenger who knows you."

"Eh!" ejaculated Tulley.

"Yes, I know you, Dave Tulley," said Fred, standing up so the rascal was able to get a square view of him, "and you know me, too."

Tulley started back as if stung by some venomous reptile and stared at the boy as if he could hardly believe the evidence of his eyes.

CHAPTER IX.

TULLEY'S TREACHERY MEETS WITH A FITTING REWARD.

Tulley was taken all aback by the unexpected appearance of Fred on the sloop.

He didn't know what to say, for he was alive to the fact that the boy he had tried to kill in such a fiendish way could hardly be expected to entertain any kind feelings toward him.

Fred sat down while Tulley glared across the short stretch of water at him.

"If you promise to behave yourself while you're aboard I'll carry you down the river to Norcross Village, on the railroad," said Professor Aldwinkle.

"I'll do the right thing," replied the ex-fireman in a surly tone.

"Take the skiff, Billy, and bring him off," said the professor.

The boy obeyed orders and Tulley stepped into the cockpit.

"We've no room for you here, so you can go forward and squat down against the mast," said the naturalist.

"Don't I get somethin' to eat first?" asked the rascal, showing his teeth like a famished hyena.

"I'll send you something," answered the professor.

So Tulley went forward and Billy received instructions to carry him some food.

Fred steered while Watkins looked after their unsavory passenger.

An hour later the sloop entered Parmedecook Lake, a wide stretch of water which connected with Twin Lakes, whence the Penobscot River continued its course.

In a straight line Norcross was about ten miles southeast, but it was all of half again as far by water.

At the rate the sloop was going there was no telling when the village would be reached.

By noon the sloop was well across the lake and close in to the southwestern shore, where the lake narrowed.

"We'll put in yonder, anchor and have dinner," said the professor.

"All right, sir," said Billy. "What's to be the bill-of-fare?"

"What can you get up?"

"Fried eggs, fried potatoes, potted tongue, canned corned beef, canned corn, and several other things, includin' coffee," replied the youth.

"We'll omit the eggs, and you may serve up the rest," said Professor Aldwinkle.

They anchored close in shore, and Billy did his cooking on top of the trunk roof of the cabin.

When dinner was ready the naturalist and Fred adjourned to the cabin, where the table was spread, while Billy carried Tulley his share of the provender.

The Bangor youth left the oil stove outside while he entered the cabin to eat his dinner, as he intended to heat water to wash the dishes with.

While the party were taking things easy in the cabin they heard their rascally passenger moving about on the roof above their heads.

They paid little attention to his movements, as they did not anticipate any mischief on his part.

They expected to get rid of him within a couple of hours at any rate.

A few minutes later Tulley dropped down into the cockpit and stuck his head in at the door.

"Say, kid, I want to see yer out here a minute," he said, addressing Billy.

"What do you want?" asked Watkins, coming to the door.

"Step outside and I'll show yer somethin'."

Suspecting nothing, Billy stepped out into the cockpit.

The moment he was clear of the sliding door Tulley slammed it shut and turned the key in it, thus making prisoners of Fred and Professor Aldwinkle.

"Now, you blamed little sea cook," cried Tulley, putting the key in his pocket, "go forward and h'ist the anchor, or I'll chuck yer overboard."

"What!" gasped Billy in amazement.

"H'ist the anchor and do it quick, or I'll kick the stuffin' out of yer," said Tulley fiercely.

"Oh, come now, none of your tricks. Open that door and get back where you belong," replied the lad.

"Don't yer give me none of yer back sass or it'll be wuss for yer," said the rascal, giving Billy a clout in the jaw that sent him staggering against the door of the cabin. "I'm boss of this boat now, so you do as I tell yer."

Billy, seeing he had no show, and judging that discretion was the better part of valor, leaped on the roof of the cabin and retired to the bows of the sloop.

By this time Professor Aldwinkle and Fred were satisfied that something was wrong outside.

The latter sprang from his seat and tried the door.

"It's fast," he said, looking at the naturalist.

"Call out to Billy," said the professor.

"Hey, Billy," shouted the young lumber king, pounding on the door to emphasize his summons, "open the door."

"Shut up in there!" replied the voice of Tulley.

"Good gracious!" ejaculated Fred. "That rascal is up to some mischief. He has us caged in here, and we can't help ourselves."

"My goodness!" exclaimed Professor Aldwinkle, staring at Fred.

"This is what you get for taking pity on that fellow. He has no more conscience than a coffin nail. I never thought he'd have a chance to play any tricks on us during the short run to Norcross. I don't see what he hopes to gain by doing us up this way; but he must have some purpose in view."

"I regret that I took him aboard," replied the professor.

"We ought never to have given him the chance to call the turn on us. We were careless, and I suppose have got to pay for it."

At that moment they heard a scuffling on the roof of the cabin and then a heavy splash in the water.

"Good Lord! He must have thrown Billy into the lake," cried Fred.

Professor Aldwinkle started up in dismay.

At that moment a key was thrust in the lock and the slide shot back, disclosing Billy with a triumphant grin on his freckled countenance.

"Billy!" exclaimed Fred. "We thought that rascal had thrown you into the water."

"Nixy. It was me that threw him in," replied the youth.

"You did!" cried Fred, stepping out into the cockpit, followed by the naturalist. "How did you ever do it?"

"I tried a Japanese grip on him and he went overboard so easy it made me laugh," said Billy.

Fred looked around for Tulley, and saw him just emerging from the water upon the bank, blowing like a grampus.

He shook his fist at the trio on the sloop.

"I'll get square with you, you young viper," he gritted, scowling at Watkins. "And with you, too, Fred Drew. I'll fix you both the first chance I get."

Billy put his thumb to his nose and wiggled his fingers derisively.

That expressive bit of pantomime made Tulley furious.

He picked up a handful of damp earth and flung it at the boy.

Billy dodged and shouted back:

"Did you ever get left?"

Tulley hunted around for a stone, and finding one let it fly at the Bangor lad.

His aim was poor and Billy didn't even have to dodge the missile.

"Hoist the anchor and let us get away from here," said Professor Aldwinkle.

Fred and Billy ran forward to turn the drum, and while they were winding in the anchor rope the ex-fireman pelted them with stones and clods of earth.

As soon as the anchor broke ground the sloop began to drift out of range of the infuriated rascal.

Billy hastened to hoist the jib and mainsail.

The light wind caught the sails and the boat was headed off shore.

Tulley could be seen shaking his fist at them every once in a while, and there wasn't any doubt but he was swearing to beat the band.

"I'm mighty glad we've got rid of him," said Fred. "Billy turned the tables on him very neatly."

"Bet your life. I made him turn a regular somerset," chuckled Billy. "The best of it was he dropped the key of the door out of his pocket as he went overboard."

"He promised to behave himself on board, too," said Professor Aldwinkle. "I'm afraid such men have little regard for their word."

"I told you he was not to be trusted, sir," said Fred.

"So you did, but I thought—well, well, he fell into the pit he dug for others. We would have taken him to Norcross. Now he'll have to walk there, and that will take him many hours."

"He is fortunate in being on the right side of the lake, for you said, I think, that the village is on this side of the Penobscot. Had he been left to his own resources on the other bank he would have been worse off, I guess."

"Very much so," replied the professor.

By this time Tulley had disappeared among the trees, while the boat was in the middle of the arm of the lake which connected with Twin Lakes.

The breeze was better now than it was during the morning, and the sloop made fair progress through the water.

In a short time the boat was skimming the surface of the north twin and was rapidly approaching Norcross, where the Bangor & Aroostook Railroad crossed the stream on a bridge.

CHAPTER X.

FRED GOES TO WORK IN A LUMBER YARD.

The sloop reached Norcross in due time, and remained there only long enough for Professor Aldwinkle to procure fresh supplies for the culinary department, then the boat resumed its way down the Penobscot.

We will not dwell upon the trip from that place to the city of Bangor, since nothing of moment happened to the three voyagers.

It is enough to say that they reached the end of their trip in good shape, and the naturalist returned the sloop to its owner and hied himself to a hotel, after paying Billy the amount agreed upon for his services, and pressing a \$10 bill on Fred to enable him to keep his head above water till he got something to do.

"Call at the Bangor House to-morrow at nine," he said to Fred after parting from the boys, "and I will take you around to my friend Wheeler, the lumber merchant."

Fred promised to be on hand, and the professor walked away.

"Now, Billy," said Fred, "I don't know the first thing about this town, so I hope you will help me out."

"Sure thing. Do you want to go any place in partic'lar?"

"I want to find a cheap hotel."

"What for?"

"To put up at for a day or two till I kind of get used to the ropes."

"G'wan! You don't want no hotel. You can sleep with me on the sloop for the present. I've got charge of her, and I always sleep aboard when she ain't rented out. If you're in a hurry to break that bill the professor gave you, you can do it at the restaurant when we go to supper."

"I accept your invitation, Billy. You're a good little chap and I shan't forget whatever you do for me. Some day I'll be rich and then——"

"How do you expect to get rich?" chipped in Watkins.

"By working my way up in the world," replied Fred, who, of course, had no intention of letting his companion know his real circumstances.

The two boys returned aboard the sloop, which was tied up to a small wharf on the river front of Bangor.

While they talked together Fred was taking in the sights of the place as far as they lay within his range of vision.

He was greatly interested in all he saw, and asked Billy many questions about Bangor.

Billy had been born there, and knew the place from A to Z, so he was as good as a guide book to Fred.

They took their supper at a nearby restaurant, and then Billy proposed that they take in a show at the Opera House.

Fred agreed to go with him.

After the show they returned to the sloop and turned in.

Next morning after breakfast Billy piloted Fred to the Bangor House, where the latter asked for Professor Aldwinkle.

The professor had just gone into the reading-room, and the clerk told the boys to go there.

The naturalist shook hands with Fred and Billy when they presented themselves before him.

"Sit down," he said to Fred. "I want to finish the morning paper and then I'll be ready to take you to my friend Wheeler."

So Billy and Fred sat down and awaited Professor Aldwinkle's convenience.

At the end of twenty minutes the professor said he would get his hat and overcoat and rejoin them.

Half an hour later Professor Aldwinkle led Fred into the office of the Wheeler Lumber Yard, down on the river front, while Billy remained outside on the walk.

Mr. Wheeler was at his desk, and received the professor very graciously.

Professor Aldwinkle introduced Fred and stated the object of his visit.

The lumber merchant looked at the boy critically and then said:

"I suppose you've had no experience at the business?"

"No, sir; but I worked a short time in a logging camp up near Chesuncook Lake, and I picked up a lot of information about the way business is carried on there," replied the young lumber king.

Fred did not state how long he was at the camp, but Mr. Wheeler seemed to consider the fact a recommendation in a way.

"Well," he said, "you look like a strong and intelligent boy, and as one of my hands has just left I'll take you on, especially as Professor Aldwinkle seems desirous of

placing you. You can start in right away. Are you a stranger in Bangor?"

"Yes, sir."

"Where are you stopping?"

"On board a small sloop at one of the wharves along the river."

"What wharf?"

"I couldn't tell you that; but Billy Watkins, who belongs to her as keeper, is outside, and I could find out from him."

"It isn't important. I only wished to know if it was far from here, and if you could find your way back and forth if you were going to remain aboard of her awhile."

"Oh, I don't expect to remain long on the sloop. I shall look for lodgings as close to the yard as possible," replied Fred.

"You will have no trouble in finding what you want right in this neighborhood," said Mr. Wheeler. "We knock off in the yard at six o'clock, so you might step outside and tell your friend William to come back here at that hour and show you the way back to the sloop. Take note of the way and the location of the yard, and then you will be able to find your way here without difficulty in the morning."

Fred went outside and told Billy that he was going to work in the lumber yard right away, and that he wished he would come after him at six o'clock.

Billy promised to be on hand and they parted for the time being.

Mr. Wheeler took Fred to his foreman and introduced him as a new employee.

"Show him the ropes, Smith. I dare say you will find him both industrious and capable. At any rate, he's been highly recommended by a friend of mine who wishes to see him pushed ahead as fast as his capabilities warrant."

"Come along, Drew; I'll show you around the yard and give you a general idea of what will be expected of you," said the foreman.

Twenty minutes later Fred was helping to load an express wagon with light building stuff.

When noontime came around one of the hands showed Fred a restaurant in the neighborhood, and the boy went there for his dinner.

Work was resumed in the yard at one, and from then till the whistles blew Fred had plenty to do, and acquitted himself to Smith's satisfaction.

Billy was standing on the sidewalk when the young lumber king left the yard.

"How do you like the job?" asked Watkins.

"First-rate."

"Hard work, ain't it?"

"I don't mind that."

"I wouldn't mind havin' somethin' better than loafin' around that sloop all day. It makes a feller dead lazy, and there ain't much in it. I wouldn't mind goin' up or down the river on another trip, partickly if I was as well paid and as well treated as I was by the professor," said Billy, feeling the little wad of bills in an inside pocket.

"You don't always go off in the sloop, do you?"

"Nope. Only when the parties want some one to work the boat."

"Where do you stay when the sloop is away?"

"Any old place. After this, as long as my money holds out, I'll hire a bed."

"I'm going to rent a room near the yard. You can bunk in with me when you haven't the boat to fall back on."

"I'd like that first rate; but you don't need no room as long as the sloop is at the wharf."

So it was agreed between them that Fred was to sleep on the boat as long as the opportunity offered, and after that Billy would hang out with his new friend.

CHAPTER XI.

THE MIDNIGHT INTRUDER.

"Who do you s'pose I seen this afternoon cruisin' around the wharves?" said Billy about a week later.

"How should I know?" replied Fred.

"He's a friend of yours," grinned Watkins.

"A friend of mine!"

"Yep—Dave Tulley."

"You saw him?"

"Sure's you're alive."

"Did he see you?"

"Dunno. If he did he didn't let on. Guess he's afraid of my Japanese grip," chuckled Billy.

"I don't want to meet him. If I did I'm afraid there'd be trouble."

"He wouldn't dare do nothin' to you in this town."

"I don't know about that. He's a vindictive rascal. He seems to have it in for me because I escaped being blown up that time."

"And he's got it in for me because I dumped him into the lake, but I ain't afraid of him," and Billy snapped his fingers to show his contempt of Tulley.

The boys were eating their suppers at a restaurant near the wharf where the sloop lay.

Fred was getting on tip-top at the lumber yard, and being an observing boy, as well as ambitious, he was picking up the business fast.

He was learning to recognize the different kinds of wood; to understand their value with relation to their particular uses; to get a line on their wholesale and retail prices, and a whole lot of other information which most boys would not have taken the trouble to inform themselves about.

Fred, as the reader is aware, had a more important object in view than his weekly wages.

He did not propose to remain a laborer in the lumber yard any longer than he could help.

He intended to work himself up—to learn all he could about the business in as short a time as possible.

When the time came for him to take his place at the head of his own extensive business he wanted to be thoroughly competent to be able to direct affairs in the right way.

"My future rests with myself," he thought. "I am not yet nineteen, and the world is still before me. If I make the best use of my opportunities now the gain will be mine. Most of the men in this yard are just plodding along intent only on putting in their ten hours a day and drawing their wages Saturday afternoon. Seems to me if they had tried to learn the ins and outs of the business, as I am trying

to do, they would be a whole lot better off to-day. I heard that Mr. Wheeler himself started out as a boy in a lumber yard, without a cent. Now look at him. He's a rich man, owns this profitable business, and he lives, I'll bet, in a swell house."

Fred didn't see any reason why success shouldn't come to him if he worked for it, just as he readily understood why fortune never rightfully comes to the shiftless and lazy boy, or the boy who hasn't the gumption to tackle the problem of his future in the right way.

The world is full of industrious and honest plodders.

These form the great army of average workmen; but they seldom rise above their level.

But some boys grasp the opportunities that come to them and consequently move up the ladder of success, rung by rung, till in time they reach the top.

It is within the power of most of our young readers to do likewise.

Ask your parents or guardians if it is not so.

When Fred and Billy returned to the sloop after their supper they sat in the cockpit and talked about such things as usually interest boys of their position in the world.

As darkness fell upon the river and the neighborhood, lights flashed out along shore from the shipping and from hundreds of houses.

The little wharf stood apart from the rest of the docks, and was silent and deserted at that hour.

Nine o'clock came around and Fred, who was tired with his day's work, said he guessed he would turn in.

Billy didn't feel like retiring at that early hour.

His day had been spent in enforced idleness, so he decided to hunt up some of his friends of the neighborhood and put in a couple of hours with them.

"Lock yourself in and hang the key on that nail close to the bull's-eye winder over my bunk. I kin get it by lying down on the roof and shovin' my hand in through the openin'," he said to Fred.

"All right," replied Fred. So Billy jumped on the wharf and strolled, whistling, away with his hands in the pockets of his jeans.

The clock of a church in the vicinity was striking the hour of eleven, and Fred was sleeping as sound as a bell, when a burly figure slouched down the wharf toward the sloop.

It was Dave Tulley.

He had recognized both the sloop and Billy that afternoon, and the recollection of what the Bangor youth had done to him on the shore of Parmedecook Lake came vividly before his mind, and he resolved to get back at that lad without unnecessary delay.

By making a few inquiries in the neighborhood he learned that Billy slept aboard the craft.

He did not find out that Billy had a companion.

Tulley approached the sloop cautiously and reconnoitered her.

The door was shut and everything was still about her.

He judged that Billy was asleep inside.

Stepping into the cockpit, he felt of the door and saw that it was fast.

"He's locked himself in," muttered the ex-fireman. "I reckon I'll soon get through that lock."

He pulled a heavy chisel from under his jacket, jammed

the point of the blade into the crack near the lock and tried to pry the sliding door back.

While he was thus employed the young lumber king woke up.

His sharp ears detected the noise at the door, and at first he thought it was Billy letting himself in.

The sound, however, was not like the rattling of a key in the lock, but rather that of slitting wood under pressure.

He sprang out of his bunk, looked at the nail on which he had left the key and saw that it was still there.

"That isn't Billy, but somebody trying to force his way in," he muttered. "I must give him a scare."

He took the key down, picked up a club they kept for protection against intruders and slipped over to the door.

Softly inserting the key in the lock, he turned it.

Tulley had paused to take a rest preparatory to fresh exertion.

Once more he stuck the chisel into the crack and bent all his strength on it.

The door slid back so easily and quickly that he lost his balance and struck his head against the side of the opening.

The chisel fell into the cabin and one of the rascal's arms followed it in.

Fred saw his chance and brought the club down on the upper part of his arm with a force that wrung a howl of pain from the man.

Tulley was something of a coward and he turned to make his escape.

Fred stepped outside and whacked him full on the back with the cudgel.

The rascal fell over in a heap in the cockpit, howling and swearing.

Fred jumped back into the cabin and drew the door nearly to, watching Tulley through the crack.

The scoundrel scrambled up and looked toward the door.

He expected to see Billy standing there with a stick in his hand, instead of which the door seemed to be closed again.

He was furious, for his arm and back pained him considerably.

And, what was even worse, he did not see how he could get back at his intended victim.

"I'll get square with you, you little villain!" he roared. No response came to his threat.

After glaring in impotent rage at the door, he got on to the wharf and began to meditate how he could get the best of the occupant of the cabin.

He wanted to wait till the numbness got out of his arm, too.

He swore under his breath as he rubbed the injured member.

What he didn't intend to do to Billy isn't worth mentioning.

Fred poked his head out of the door and looked at him. He had recognized the rascal.

Tulley thought it was Billy's face he saw, as the night was dark.

"I'll fix you, you young varmint!" he hissed, shaking his fist at Fred.

At that moment Billy himself came down the wharf.

As he drew near the sloop he saw the intruder bent over toward the boat.

Knowing the man had no business there, though at the moment he did not recognize him as Tulley, he uttered a loud yell and jumped forward.

Tulley, startled by the unexpected and sudden onset in his rear, turned around and started back.

He stumbled upon the string-piece, lost his balance, and with a loud yell fell backward, clutching fruitlessly at the spile-head, into the river.

CHAPTER XII.

FRED'S UNEXPECTED MEETING WITH SOL SCOTT.

The rascal went under with a loud splash.

The tide swept him under the wharf and out at the other side.

"Help! Help!" he shouted, as he came up and splashed about in the water.

Billy ran over to look for him, but the fellow was so far beyond his reach that he could not help him.

Then he turned toward the sloop, intending to get the oars out of the cabin and go to the man's assistance in the skiff which floated from the stern of the bigger boat.

Then it was he saw Fred standing in the cockpit in an airy costume.

"Did Tulley fall in the water?" asked Fred.

"Was that Tulley?" asked Billy.

"Yes."

"He fell in, all right. I've got to help him out, I s'pose, though I hate to do it," said Billy.

"He's caught hold of one of the spiles of the next wharf and the night watchman is helping him out," replied Fred.

"I'm glad of it. Let's get inside and you can tell me what happened."

They entered the cabin, secured the door, and then Fred explained to Billy all that had transpired from the moment he woke up and heard the noise at the door.

"Gee! You handed it out hot to him," cried Billy delightedly. "The bath he got in the river ought to finish him. If I see him hangin' around this neighborhood I'm goin' to have him arrested for tryin' to break into the cabin of the sloop. If he knows what's good for himself he'll keep away."

Fred hopped into bed and Billy did likewise, and in a little while both were asleep.

Tulley was pulled out of the water by the night watchman of the next wharf.

He told his rescuer that he had fallen into the river by accident.

The watchman advised him to get a stiff horn of whisky at a nearby saloon and then go home and get into bed.

Tulley walked into the saloon, dripping like a dog just out of the water.

He called for several whiskies and then started for his lodgings.

He took more whiskies on the way, so that by the time he reached his room he was more than half drunk.

He was in an ugly temper as well.

He made so much noise that one of the other lodgers remonstrated with him.

A scrap was the result and both were arrested.

At the examination the next morning the magistrate

decided that all the blame lay with Tulley, and he sent him to the workhouse for six months.

For that reason Fred and Billy didn't see him any more, though they were on their guard against another visit from the rascal.

Fred continued to give great satisfaction at the lumber yard, and Mr. Wheeler, in replying to a letter from Professor Aldwinkle, wrote the naturalist that the boy was turning out one of the best hands he had ever had in his yard.

Thus time passed, summer came and Billy went off on a long trip in the sloop, which fact compelled the young lumber king to secure other lodgings for himself.

Billy was gone three months.

On his return the sloop was sold and that threw him out of his sinecure.

Fred hired a larger room with two beds and took Billy in with him.

He made the Bangor youth look for another job at once.

Billy wasn't stuck on working while he had money in his clothes, but Fred, who had great influence with him, talked him into giving up his old tricks for good.

The lad soon caught on with the bill poster of the Opera House, and after that he worked steadily.

Thus six months passed away altogether since Fred landed in Bangor, and he had become assistant foreman in the yard.

His wages were now higher than the amounts paid to many men who had been in Mr. Wheeler's employ for several years.

He had earned his promotion not only by strict attention to his duties, but by the knowledge of the business he had picked up in one way or another.

He had made himself an important factor in the yard, and stood high in his employer's good opinion.

It was about this time that Dave Tulley was released from the workhouse.

He had never forgotten the grudge he had against Fred and Billy, the latter particularly.

He had vowed a hundred times in prison that he would get square on the small youth if he didn't on the other.

The first thing he did therefore was to go to the wharf where the sloop formerly was moored to see if he could get a line on Billy.

He learned of the sale of the boat and the disappearance of her young keeper.

He was greatly disappointed, for it looked to him as if he would lose his revenge after all.

That same day, Fred, on his way back to the yard after dinner, ran smack against an elderly man coming toward him.

The man slipped and fell to the flagging.

"I beg your pardon," began Fred. "I didn't see—why, Sol Scott, is it really you?"

It was the cook of the logging camp.

The man looked up in some surprise and then scrambled on his feet.

He stood and stared at Fred almost incredulously.

"Sonny, this isn't your ghost, is it?" he said.

"Ghost! What put that into your head? I think I must look like a pretty healthy ghost," replied the boy laughingly.

"Why, I thought you were dead. The men who were felling trees on the bluff the afternoon Silas McBee took you out of the engine-room, accused you of stealin' \$200 from him, and tried to make you confess by having you tied to a tree overlookin' the river, reported that McBee carried matters a bit too far. In his attempt to scare you, Wagner, followin' his orders, cut too far into the tree, which snapped off and carried you down into the river. An effort was made to save you, but it failed, and so everybody believed you were drowned."

"The fact that you are talking to me now is pretty good evidence that I was not drowned," replied Fred. "I escaped drowning as well as starvation through a fortunate combination of circumstances which landed me in this town and gave me a first-rate job in yonder lumber yard. It is time for me to get back to work, so I cannot talk with you any longer just now; but if you will tell me where you are stopping I will call on you and tell you my story."

"I am second cook at the Passamaquoddy Inn on Blank Street, a pretty high-toned neighborhood. I have a room there. Come up and see me to-night if you can."

"I will," said Fred, and then they parted.

The Passamaquoddy Inn was situated in the midst of the wealthy residents of Bangor, and Fred, on inquiry, found that a street car would take him within a few blocks of the place.

Shortly after he finished his supper he started for the Inn.

He found it without difficulty, but had to wait awhile until Sol was off duty.

The cook took him to his room, and Fred spent the evening with him, Sol declaring repeatedly that it did his old eyes good to see his young friend once more in the land of the living.

"I am glad to know that you have landed in a good berth," he said, "and that you are comin' on in the world. I have quite a few things to tell you, too, and one is I've come into a legacy."

"A legacy!" exclaimed Fred in surprise.

"A law firm of this city has been lookin' for me a long time. A relative of mine I hadn't seen for years died and left me some forest land in the northern part of this State, bordering on one of the tributaries of the Penobscot River. The lawyers say the property, which cost my relative hardly anything, is quite valuable now," said the cook, who did not show any indication of a swelled head over his good fortune.

"My goodness! You're lucky. I congratulate you."

"I never expected to be well off. I can hardly realize that I am, or will be, as soon as the lawyers settle the matter up."

"What do you expect to do with your property? Sell it?" asked Fred.

"I don't know. I shouldn't know what to do with a lot of money if I had it. I have never been used to much prosperity."

"You ought to make it turn you in an income in some way."

"I will consider the matter after I get possession of the property," replied Sol without any enthusiasm in his tone. "Whatever I do, sonny, I shall have an eye on your fu-

ture. I intend to help you along, as I haven't anybody else in the world in whom I am interested."

It was close on to midnight when Fred left the old man's room and started for his lodgings.

He was walking along on the shady side of the principal residential street of Bangor, when he saw a gentleman and a young lady approaching up a side street.

They did not specially attract his notice, and he would not have given them a second thought had he not suddenly noticed the suspicious actions of two men who were standing close to the corner they would have to pass.

Fred stopped, for he had an idea something was going to happen.

Something did happen as soon as the gentleman and his companion reached the corner.

The two men sprang suddenly upon them, one seizing the young lady and choking off a half-uttered scream, while the other attacked her escort.

Apparently the two rascals were footpads and their object meant robbery.

CHAPTER XIII.

FRED AND JENNIE WHEELER.

It didn't take Fred but a moment to make up his mind to go to the assistance of the persons attacked.

The fact that he would have two rascals to contend with who might be armed; while he didn't have anything at all in the shape of a weapon, did not cool his resolve.

He was strong and active and could use his fists with some skill, and besides he was full of pluck.

He darted across the street in a jiffy and sprang upon the fellow who had hold of the young lady, who seemed to be about fifteen years of age.

Biff!

He landed a sledge-hammer blow on the rascal's jaw, sending him staggering against a railing and causing him to release the girl, who shrank back.

As Fred followed up his attack he caught a good view of his antagonist.

He experienced a shock of surprise as he recognized Dave Tulley.

Tulley also knew him, and with an exclamation of rage jumped at him.

Fred avoided a swinging blow and planted one himself on the point of the man's chin, sending him to the walk dazed and knocked out.

Seeing that Tulley made no immediate effort to get up Fred turned his attention to the other footpad who was having some trouble to overcome the gentleman.

Smack!

Fred slugged him under the ear and he went down as though hit by a club.

The boy then stood over him ready to repeat the blow as soon as the man tried to get up.

"Oh, father, father!" cried the girl, running into the gentleman's arms.

"You blamed imp!" roared the second ruffian, making a swipe at Fred as he started to rise. "I'll kill you!"

The boy avoided the blow and jabbed him a short undercut on the side of his bulldog jaw that sent him sprawling once more.

Tulley was now recovering his faculties and he started to help his companion.

The gentleman interfered in so energetic a way that the ex-fireman hauled off.

Fred followed his man right up, giving him no time to get up.

He slugged him for the third time in the eye and then seized him by the collar of his jacket.

It was apparent that neither of the rascals was armed, or they would have drawn their weapons before this.

Tulley, seeing he could not help his associate, and fearing that a policeman might show up, took to his heels and disappeared down the street.

The gentleman then helped Fred hold the other footpad.

Then it was that the unexpected recognition took place.

The gentleman proved to be Mr. Wheeler, Fred's employer.

"Why, Drew, is that you?" said the lumber merchant in surprise.

"Yes, sir. Glad I happened along in time to help you. What are we going to do with this chap?"

"March him to my house. It's only a few steps away."

The ruffian resisted their efforts, but when Fred threatened to punch him in the jaw if he didn't go quietly, he yielded in a sullen way.

Reaching Mr. Wheeler's house, which was a handsome dwelling in the midst of a spacious lawn, they marched the footpad up to a side door.

"Go into my library, Jennie," said Mr. Wheeler, "and telephone for a policeman."

The girl hastened to do as her father bade her.

In a few minutes she came to the door and said a couple of officers would be sent at once.

Mr. Wheeler and Fred conversed until the policemen came, but they were careful to give their prisoner no chance to get away.

He was handed over to the officers on the charge of attempted highway robbery, and the lumberman told the policemen that he and his employee would attend the magistrate's court in the morning to press the charge.

"This is my daughter," said Mr. Wheeler, introducing Fred, after the policemen had taken the footpad away. "We are both under great obligations to you for coming to our aid."

"Glad to make your acquaintance, Miss Wheeler," said Fred with a polite bow.

The girl bowed and smiled at the good-looking boy.

"I won't forget your plucky conduct, Drew," said the merchant. "I am rather glad it was you, one of my employees, to whom we are so much indebted. It will give me the better opportunity to testify my appreciation in some substantial way."

"That's all right, Mr. Wheeler. Don't worry about repaying me in any way. Your thanks are sufficient. It was my duty to interfere, and it is an added satisfaction to know that I was able to render my employer a special service."

Mr. Wheeler shook him warmly by the hand and then Fred took his leave.

Next morning Fred and Mr. Wheeler appeared against the footpad and he was held for trial.

Fred gave the police a description of Tulley, and men were sent out to locate and arrest him.

The rascal, however, avoided capture by leaving the city early in the morning, but he swore to get even with Fred at the first chance.

On the following day Jennie Wheeler paid a visit to her father's lumber yard, something she hadn't done before in months.

The object of her visit was to meet Fred again, as his plucky conduct against the footpads, as well as his good-looking face, and the high way her father spoke about the lad, greatly attracted her.

Her father happened to be away, so she walked out into the yard.

She found Fred directing a gang of three men who were loading a big truck with boards of extra width.

Fred recognized her and bowed courteously.

She smiled sweetly and asked him a few unimportant questions about the wood that was being put on the truck.

The fact that she was his employer's daughter, and was dressed in swell style, made Fred rather shy about following up the opening she had made for him.

Finally she said:

"You were very brave to step in and attack those two men night before last. I noticed that you handled yourself in a fearless way. I don't know what father and I should have done but for your timely appearance. I had much of my jewelry on, for we had attended a reception a few blocks from our home. Mother was not feeling well, so she did not come with us. We did not think it worth while to use our carriage, for the distance was so short. I preferred to walk, anyway. There is little doubt that we would have been robbed of everything we had, so I want you to know that I am very grateful to you."

Fred bowed and blushed a bit under the bewitching look she gave him.

He felt something like a fish out of water in the presence of such a lovely and accomplished girl.

"You must come up and see us some night soon," she continued. "Won't you?"

"I would be glad to, but——"

He was thinking that it was hardly his place to visit his employer's daughter, and, moreover, he did not consider his best suit good enough in which to appear at the Wheeler home.

"Oh, you really must come," she said in such a persuasive way that he didn't know how to refuse her.

"I'm afraid I wouldn't look nice enough to call at your house," he said.

"Not look nice enough!" she exclaimed. "You looked all right the other night, I am sure."

"That was well enough in its way, but not good enough to present myself in at your house."

"You looked nice enough, I am sure. You mustn't feel that we are going to criticize your appearance. We don't expect you to look like a young man of fashion. I judge a person by what he is, not what he tries to make himself out to be. You are my ideal of a real boy. I don't wish to flatter you when I say that I would prefer your company to that of many boys who move in our set. My father says you are an unusually smart boy and bound

to make your mark in time. That is my opinion, too, though I have seen but little of you."

"You are very kind to express such a good opinion of me, Miss Wheeler. I shall endeavor to deserve it, and your father's good opinion also," replied Fred with a flush.

"Well, I must be going now. Shall we expect you to call—say, Friday evening?" she said.

"I will call," replied Fred, seeing no way out of it.

"Very well. We will look for you about eight o'clock. Good-by."

"Good-by, Miss Wheeler."

Fred looked after her and thought what a lovely girl she was in every way.

She put on none of the airs that many rich young ladies affected.

She was as unassuming as though her parents were in average circumstances, whereas Mr. Wheeler was one of Bangor's richest and foremost citizens.

"She's a fine girl, all right," he said to himself, as he returned to the work he was engaged in, and ten minutes later the truck drove out of the yard and he went into the office to turn over the order to the head bookkeeper.

CHAPTER XIV.

FRED DISCOVERS A STARTLING PLOT.

On the following day he went up to Mr. Wheeler when he saw him in the yard.

"Your daughter was here yesterday and invited me to call at your home. I promised her I would, but I am not sure that you would care to have me do so."

"Why not? My daughter told me she invited you and that you were coming. We shall expect you."

"Well, sir, of course I will come then; but I recognize the fact that I am only an employee of yours, and not a very old one, so—"

"Don't let that fact make you think that you will not be welcome at my home. I regard you as one of my most promising workers. You will not always occupy the position you do now. The fact that you have risen to be an assistant foreman here at your age, and after such short service, is evidence that you are not an ordinary boy. You have earned your advancement in a way that meets my heartiest approval, and I would not be surprised to see you in full charge of this yard some day."

Then telling Fred that he would be expected Friday evening, Mr. Wheeler entered his office, leaving the boy feeling pretty good indeed.

"Say, where are you goin' to-night?" asked Billy Watkins Friday evening when he walked into the room he shared with Drew, and saw Fred sprucing up in an unusual way.

"Going to call at the boss's house to-night."

"Gee! Gettin' into swell society, ain't you?" grinned Billy.

"Oh, it may not happen again—that is, soon."

"Sort of special occasion, eh?"

"That's about it."

"Nothin' like gettin' up in the world. I'd like to do the grand myself if I had the chance; but nothin' like that comes my way. You're a born gent, I guess. You're smart and have been to school. I ain't had no such luck."

My old man was a 'longshoreman, and my mother took in washin'. I never went to school any more than I could help. I've learned more since I've been with you than I ever learned before. You've been a real friend to me and I ain't forgettin' it. I'll stand by you as long as you let me. When you feel that you don't want to know me any more, why, I'll get out."

"I hope that time will never come, Billy. You may not be educated and refined, but you're the right sort, and I'll never shake you, though we may in time separate as roommates. I'm going to help you get along in the world and be your friend, Billy; paste that fact in your hat," replied Fred earnestly.

"Thanks, Fred. I always thought you were the real goods and a yard wide. If I ever can do anythin' for you, you kin bet yer boots I'll do it quick as wink," answered the Bangor youth emphatically.

"I know you would, Billy. Going to the theater, I suppose?"

"Bet your life I am. There's a new show on to-night. A melodrama full of thrills, where the heroine says, 'Stand aside, villain, and let me pass,' when the chap in swell togs and a cigarette tries to win her away from her best feller."

The boys took a car at the next corner, and Billy dropped off in front of the Opera House, while Fred continued on toward S—— Avenue, where the Wheelers lived.

When he reached his employer's house a maid admitted him to the sitting-room upstairs, which was an honor he was not aware of, as most callers were taken into the parlor on the lower floor.

Mr. and Mrs. Wheeler were in the room, and Fred was introduced to the latter.

Jennie soon came in, looking uncommonly lovely in a fine house gown.

She sat beside Fred and devoted herself entirely to him during the evening.

After Fred had been there about an hour Mr. Wheeler went out, but came back in a few minutes with a couple of small boxes in his hand.

"I wish to present you with a small token of my appreciation of your services the other evening," said the merchant, removing the cover from one of the boxes and then handing it to Fred.

Looking into it the boy saw a fine gold watch and chain to match.

Before Fred could open his mouth to express the surprise he felt at receiving such a handsome present, Jennie took the other box from her father and said:

"And this is my present, which goes with the watch."

She handed the box to Fred, and he saw a splendid watch charm incrusted with small diamonds which formed his initials, "F. D."

The boy gasped and for a moment he seemed tongue-tied, then he managed to stammer out his thanks, but conscious he was getting all tangled up.

The rest of the evening passed very pleasantly, and at ten o'clock he got up to go.

Jennie accompanied him to the hall door and gave him a pressing invitation to call again soon.

"I shall claim you as my own particular visitor next

time," she said with an encouraging smile, "so remember you must ask for me when the maid comes to the door."

"Certainly," he replied, delighted at the idea of being entertained by her alone. "I will call any time you say."

"Then come next Friday," she said.

Several weeks passed, and then Smith, the foreman, falling sick, his duties were turned over to Fred to perform.

Late one afternoon Fred received a memorandum from the bookkeeper of a large order which he was told to get out in the morning in a hurry, and send it to its destination on the wagons belonging to the yard.

He knew where to find all the stuff but one of the items mentioned.

This was something he did not know was in the yard.

He consulted the other sub-foreman, but he had no idea where the stuff was stored.

He went around and asked the hands one by one if they knew anything about the wood in question, but none of them did.

"That's funny," mused the young lumber king, "for one or two of the men must have had a hand in receiving it when it came here, and surely they ought to remember where they stored it."

The men who had handled it months before had forgotten all about the matter.

Fred would have made it a point to call on Smith that evening to consult him about the matter, but he knew the foreman had gone out of town to recuperate.

He had some idea about consulting Mr. Wheeler, but as that gentleman had gone home the boy did not feel that he ought to visit him at his house, for it was not certain he knew where the material had been stowed in the yard.

Besides, Fred hated to betray his ignorance, though, as a matter of fact, he could not be held accountable for a matter that had occurred before he came to work in the yard.

After considering the matter for a while, he took a lantern, as it was growing dark, and went to different places where he fancied the stuff might be, but when quitting time came he had not succeeded in locating what he was in search of.

As he carried the key of the office, he locked up and went home.

While at supper he suddenly thought of a part of the yard he had never been in except once or twice when he was an ordinary laborer.

It was a sort of pocket that extended out over the river.

"Maybe the stuff is there?" he thought. "I'll look there first thing in the morning."

He finished his supper and started for his lodgings.

Before he had gone very far he stopped.

"I think I'll go back to the yard, take a lantern and look now," he said. "If I knew the material was there I'd feel better satisfied. If I don't investigate that pocket now I'll think about the matter all evening."

So back to the yard he went, let himself in through the office, lighted a lantern and started for the pocket.

Reaching it he began to examine the stock there very carefully.

"Eureka!" he exclaimed at last, flashing the light upon a certain spot. "Here it is, stowed in this corner. Nothing like perseverance after all."

He was delighted at his success, for now there would be no delay in the morning shipment.

He put the lantern down behind a pile of lumber and walked to the end of the pocket to glance out on the river.

As he laid his arms on the bulkhead he heard voices beneath him.

Looking down he saw two shadowy forms perched on the thick stringer.

Strangers had no right to be there, especially at that hour.

He was about to yell at them when one of them said:

"If you're ready, Tulley, we'll crawl over the bulkhead and start the ball rollin'. It's nearly eight now, and the watchman is at the other end of the yard by this time."

"All right," replied the other. "This is where I get square with Wheeler for sendin' my pal up. He'd have sent me up, too, if I hadn't lit out of town too quick for the cops. We'll wake the town up with a blaze that'll give the whole fire department the job of their lives, and Wheeler will lose a fortune, for I reckon he ain't more than half insured."

"My gracious!" gasped Fred. "That's Tulley, and he and another chap are going to set fire to the yard. Well, if they do it it will be because I can't stop them."

He slipped back to where he had left the lantern, blew it out, and then picking a stout piece of scantling off a pile close at hand, he hid himself in a dark spot and awaited the arrival of the two rascals.

CHAPTER XV.

FRED IS MADE MANAGER OF THE LUMBER YARD.

Hardly had Fred concealed himself when he saw a figure scramble over the bulkhead, followed by a second.

They sprang down into the pocket.

One of them carried a big bundle under his arm.

"This oil-soaked waste will give the blaze a fine start before the watchman gets on to the fact that the yard is afire," said Tulley's companion. "Then it will be too late for him to do anythin' but send in a fire alarm. By the time the engines get here the fire will be under good headway."

"Where shall we start the blaze? I should think this pocket would be a good place. There seems to be a lot of light stuff here," said Tulley.

"This is as good a spot as any. We'll shove the waste under this pile and then apply a match. You attend to it while I go and see where the watchman is. Don't light up till I get back."

Tulley's associate passed Fred's hiding place and disappeared in the darkness, leaving the ex-fireman to plant the oiled waste where it would do the most harm.

"There, that will do first rate," Fred heard Tulley mutter in a tone of satisfaction. "It's all ready for business as soon as Moseby gets back."

Fred judged it was high time for him to put a stop to the incendiary proceedings, and the best chance he had was while the man Moseby was away.

Creeping from his place of concealment, Fred drew near the unsuspecting Tulley.

Raising the scantling, he struck the rascal on the head just hard enough to temporarily stun him.

Springing on him, he pulled the fellow's handkerchief out of his pocket and tied his hands behind his back.

Then he gagged him with a bunch of the oiled waste.

After which he dragged him out of sight behind the bulkhead and lay in wait for Moseby.

That chap did not stay away long.

"Where are you, Tulley?" he cried in a low tone.

"Here," replied Fred, stepping up and knocking him down with the scantling. "Now, lie still, or I'll break your head."

The young acting foreman then began to shout for the night watchman.

In a few minutes the man appeared on the scene.

"Who's there?" he asked, pausing at the entrance to the pocket.

"Fred Drew. Come here. I've caught a couple of rascals as they were about to set fire to this yard."

"How did you get on to them? I had no idea you or any one else was in the yard."

"I'll tell you later. Get the rope."

So the watchman went for the rope.

"I say, young feller, let me off, and I'll make it all right with you," said Moseby. "This ain't my plan, but the other chap's, who brought me here to help him."

"As long as you came to help him you're just as guilty as he is."

"He's got a grudge against the owner of this yard and I hain't."

"Then why did you butt in to what didn't concern you?"

"Just to oblige him."

"That's where you were a fool, and you'll have to pay for it."

The watchman now reappeared with the rope, and in spite of Moseby's resistance they secured him.

Fred then showed the watchman where Tulley lay helpless behind the bulkhead.

"We'll take them over to the office and notify the police. Just look at that big bunch of oil-soaked cotton-waste they stowed under that dried pile of light wood. Once that was lighted the whole pocket would have been ablaze in no time at all," said Fred. "We won't disturb that till the police see it as evidence against the rascals."

They dragged the men to the office and then Fred called up the police station and told the officer at the desk about the serious catastrophe which had happily been averted.

The man promised that several policemen would be sent right away.

After ringing off Fred called up Mr. Wheeler's house.

The lumberman himself answered.

Fred told the whole story over the wire, and explained how it came about that he was on hand at the critical moment to save the yard.

In due time the police showed up, viewed the scene of the contemplated starting point of the fire, and carried the two rascals off with them.

Fifteen minutes later Mr. Wheeler drove up in his carriage.

Fred took him around to the pocket and showed him the bundle of waste soaked with oil ready to be ignited.

"Drew, you've saved the yard. I am under the greatest obligation to you, and you may be sure I won't forget the service you have done for me," he said.

Next morning the rascals were held for trial by the police court magistrate.

Subsequently they were tried, convicted and got fifteen years each in State prison, where they still are.

Mr. Wheeler presented Fred with his check for \$1,000 as an evidence of his appreciation of the boy's prompt action in the emergency.

Fred did not want to take it, but the merchant insisted.

A week afterward Smith returned to work, and the young lumber king resumed his duties as under foreman, but he had established a high-water record in the yard that would always stand to his credit.

With the beginning of the new year Mr. Wheeler called Fred into his office and told him that he was going to post him in all the details of the business so that he would be competent to take charge of the yard.

"I'm going to Europe with my family this summer, and we expect to remain away four or five months. I have picked you out as the person to run the business during my absence. It will be a great responsibility, but I believe you will be equal to it. It is a position, too, that calls for integrity of character, for I will have to give you a confidential insight into many things that no one knows but myself. I don't know any one else in my employ I feel I could trust as much as you, nor in fact do I think there is any one more capable than yourself to undertake the management of my business affairs while I am away. You are young, it is true, but you have a wonderful head on your shoulders, and I put great faith in it."

Fred was astonished, but he believed he would, after suitable coaching, be able to run things to Mr. Wheeler's satisfaction.

He thanked the lumber merchant for offering him such a splendid opportunity to show what was in him, and promised to discharge his trust faithfully.

From that day at intervals during the next four months Fred was closeted with Mr. Wheeler in his private office, and he gradually became acquainted with all the inside details of a big lumber business.

No one in the office or yard knew anything about the important position that Fred was slated for until Mr. Wheeler made the announcement officially that he had made the boy general manager of his yard, and that during his (Wheeler's) absence in Europe Fred would be the boss of the place.

As the boy had made himself a favorite among the employees no jealousy was created by his remarkable advancement, though all were surprised.

It was generally credited to the fact that Fred had in various ways made himself solid with his employer.

So Mr. Wheeler, his wife and Jennie left Bangor for their European trip, and our hero assumed charge of the business.

Jennie promised to correspond regularly with Fred, and he assured her he would answer all her letters, so it may be assumed that they had become very warm friends indeed.

When Billy heard that Fred was boss pro tem. of the Wheeler lumber yard he turned several somersaults expressive of his delight at his friend's big rise in the world.

"You'll be a partner in the business bimeby," he said in a tone of satisfaction.

"Oh, I guess not!" laughed Fred.

"The old man has got a daughter and you're sweet on her. All you've got to do is to marry her and then her father will take you into the business. That's the way things always turn out in story books, and there ain't no reason why it shouldn't turn out the same way with you," said Billy, nodding his head emphatically.

"Billy, you mustn't talk nonsense," said Fred severely.

"G'wan! That ain't nonsense. That's the proper thing. You've worked your way up to manager of the biz. There ain't no reason why you shouldn't be junior partner next. If it don't turn out that way you kin call me a——"

Rap, rap, rap.

"See who's at the door, Billy."

It was the landlady with a letter for Fred just left by a messenger.

The young lumber manager tore the envelope open and glanced over the enclosure.

It was written on one of the letter headings of the Passamaquoddy Inn and was in the handwriting of the manager.

It ran as follows:

"Mr. Fred Drew,

"Dear Sir: Call here without delay. Sol Scott, our second cook, met with an accident this evening. The doctor says he will die, and he wants to see you at once on a matter of great importance. Yours truly,

"HOWARD HAZLITT, Mgr."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE YOUNG LUMBER KING.

"My gracious!" exclaimed Fred after mastering the brief contents of the note.

"What's the matter?" asked Billy, noting the serious look in his roommate's face. "The lumber ain't afire, is it?"

"No. You remember I have often spoke to you about Sol Scott?"

"Sure."

"He's met with an accident which the doctor thinks is fatal. Sol has sent for me, so I'll have to take a car and go right over to the Inn."

"What happened to him?"

"The note doesn't state anything about it," replied Fred, getting ready to go.

"Too bad. I suppose he hain't got much money and he wants to see that he is planted decently."

"Hasn't much money, eh? He owns a lot of land in the northern part of the State. It is valued at several thousand dollars."

"Gosh! And he's workin' as second cook in a hotel? He must be weak in his upper story," said Billy.

"There's nothing the matter with his upper story. It simply pleases him to work, that's all. He's used to it, and prosperity is such a surprise to him that he doesn't know how to take advantage of it."

Fred was ready to go, and Billy went with him as far as the Opera House.

When Fred reached the Passamaquoddy Inn he found Sol Scott almost at his last gasp.

The old man's dimming eyes brightened when the boy entered the room.

"Sonny," he whispered feebly, "I'm done for."

"What happened to him?" Fred asked the attendant.

"The copper coffee urn exploded in his face and a piece of the metal was driven into one of his lungs," was the answer.

"I'm sorry to find you this way, Sol," said Fred in a sorrowful tone.

"I know you are, sonny, but it can't be helped. My time has come and I've got to go. That legacy of mine hasn't done me much good, but it's a satisfaction to me to know that you will benefit by it. You are my only friend and I have left it to you. Open that top drawer of the bureau and you will find my will properly signed and witnessed. My lawyers drew it up and it makes you my heir."

"Never mind the will now, Sol," said Fred.

The cook insisted, however, that he must take possession of it at once.

"I shan't die happy unless I know you've got it. I want to see it in your hands."

So Fred took possession of the will, and then the old man smiled happily.

"You're a fine boy, sonny, a fine boy. You've got up in the world without any help, but you need money, for money is the main thing in this world. Well, that paper will make you well off as soon as I am dead."

Fred took the old man's hand in his own and strove to make his last hours as pleasant as possible.

The cook lingered for an hour and then died whispering:

"Bless you, sonny. I'm going. I feel everythin' slippin' away from me. I can't see your face, but I can feel your hand. Bless—you!"

And so he died, with a sweet smile on his face, as though he saw the golden gates ajar in the distance, and a heavenly host coming to welcome him to that place where the weary are forever at rest.

Fred closed his eyes, bound up his sagging jaw, and composed his limbs.

Then he left the room and sent a messenger to the Opera House to tell Billy Watkins to come out to the Passamaquoddy Inn.

Billy came, and the two kept an all-night vigil beside the cook's corpse.

Next morning Fred gave directions to an undertaker to take charge of Scott's body and place it in a fine coffin after embalming it.

Fred bought a nice plot in the Bangor cemetery and had the old man interred in it.

Later on he raised a fine headstone to his memory.

He hired Scott's lawyers to probate the cook's will, and the legal gentlemen congratulated him on coming into possession of a handsome legacy.

In the meantime Fred carried on Mr. Wheeler's lumber yard in a way that satisfied the employees that he was born to the business.

He had kept Mr. Wheeler informed regularly by letter how things were going on, and once in a while had been obliged to send him a cable message when he felt he needed special instructions.

The Wheelers returned late in October, and the young lumber king met them at the depot.

Miss Jennie looked prettier than ever, and she appeared to be delighted to meet Fred again.

"You have done remarkably well, Fred," said Mr. Wheeler on his first visit to the office. "In fact, I am so pleased with the way in which you have conducted my business that I have decided to make you a present of a small interest in the yard on the first of the year, and have you continue as general superintendent."

"Thank you, Mr. Wheeler, but I shall have to decline your kind offer."

"What's that? Decline to become a partner in my business?" exclaimed the lumberman in great astonishment.

"Yes, sir. No doubt this seems strange to you that I, whom you regard as a boy without other prospects than what I have made for myself, should turn down such a liberal proposition. In order to set myself right it will be necessary for me to make an explanation which I had hoped to keep back for some time yet."

"What explanation?"

"This, sir. I sought employment in your yard apparently as a poor and friendless boy, and I have endeavored to live up to the character ever since. I am not poor, however, neither am I friendless. I am an orphan, it is true, but my guardian, John Singleton, is a noted lawyer of Portland, where I was born and brought up. You have probably heard of Willis Peabody, president of the Northwestern Lumber Co.?"

"Certainly I have. While he lived he was known as Maine's lumber king. He left his extensive property to his grandson, I understand."

"He did. I am that grandson, for Mr. Peabody was my mother's father."

"What!" ejaculated Mr. Wheeler, staring at Fred. "You Mr. Peabody's grandson?"

"Yes, sir. I am virtually the owner of the Northwestern Lumber Co. and all the thousands of acres of timber land that formerly belonged to Willis Peabody."

The lumberman fairly gasped at this revelation.

It seemed too incredible for him to believe.

If this boy was really the heir in question, what induced him to masquerade as a poor boy, and seek an humble position in a lumber yard.

Fred hastened to tell him the reason.

He told Mr. Wheeler about the interview he had had with his guardian in which the lawyer had put the matter squarely before him as to his plans for the future.

Whether he should go to college or start out and learn the lumber business, in which his future interests lay, from the ground floor up.

He had elected to do the latter, and then told the merchant about his weeks of rugged experience at the logging camp, which ended more suddenly than he had counted on, and almost ended him at the same time.

"My report of the injustice I had suffered at the hands of the superintendent, Silas McBee, I forwarded to my guardian soon after I went to work for you, and it led to Mr. McBee's discharge. Since I have been in this town I have communicated regularly with Mr. Singleton, and kept him informed of my progress in your yard."

"My gracious! This revelation of yours is the greatest surprise of my life," said Mr. Wheeler.

"Now you see why I cannot accept an interest in your business, though I should like to continue as your superintendent, or in any other responsible capacity, until the time comes for me to take charge of my own interests in the lumber company."

"I shall be glad to have you remain with me as long as you feel disposed to do so," said the lumber merchant cordially.

"Thank you, sir. That will suit me very well indeed."

On the following evening he called at Mr. Wheeler's house, and there was a whole lot of difference in his reception, for he was now recognized as a wealthy young lumber king and not a comparatively poor lad of ordinary parentage.

He continued to visit there with unfailing regularity, and Mr. and Mrs. Wheeler noted with satisfaction that Fred and their daughter were likely to make a match.

When the boy reached his twenty-first birthday he severed his connection with the Wheeler lumber yard and assumed the responsibilities of head of the Northwestern Lumber Co.

Fred sent Billy Watkins into the wilderness to fill a job under the superintendent at what that young lad thought a princely salary.

"Learn all you can about the business, Billy," said Fred on parting from him. "I want you to become superintendent some day yourself, and I shall be greatly disappointed if you don't make good."

"Gee! That will be fine. I'll get there, Fred, for I'm going to imitate you—work myself up."

He was appointed superintendent four years later when he came to Bangor at Fred's particular request to witness his wedding to Jennie Wheeler.

Fred and Jennie went to California on their wedding trip, and while they were away Mr. Wheeler, who was vice-president of the lumber company, transacted the duties of president and manager.

Fred transferred Sol Scott's legacy over to Billy as a nest-egg for his future, and Watkins considers himself pretty well fixed.

The Northwestern Lumber Co. is the most important one of its kind in the State, and Fred is independently wealthy.

As he is not yet thirty, he may still be properly styled a young lumber king.

THE END.

Read "RALPH ROY'S RICHES; OR, A SMART BOY'S RUN ON WALL STREET LUCK," which will be the next number (190) of "Fame and Fortune Weekly."

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Fame and Fortune Weekly

NEW YORK, MAY 14, 1909.

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GOOD STORIES.

A compass without a magnetic needle has been invented by an artisan at Kiel, Prussia. It is in the form of a gyroscope, which, when suspended in a certain way, always adjusts itself to the earth's axis. The invention is regarded as of great importance to ironclads, where the compass-needle is frequently deflected by the adjacent metal.

A cocoanut was brought to me just as picked up in a Colombo garden, with the head of a big rat fixed into the nut, the rat being not long dead. Clearly the rat was up a tree nibbling at, or rather being well into the nut, nearly full size, when the nut tumbled, and before the rat could withdraw it was crushed to death between the nut and the ground.

In a boys' school in Trondjheim, Norway, the lads are taught cooking, and in this line show remarkable skill. Other male schools are to follow the practice. Women must look to their laurels. Ousted by men cooks in the highest professional walks of cookery, the ubiquitous "maid of all work" will presently have to make room for the "man of all work."

The Mayor of Aldebury, England, is Mrs. Garrett Anderson. She recently gave a banquet to a party of her councilors and other prominent guests. The mayor was dressed in black, and wore a widow's cap. In her speech she expressed the hope that she would prove a motherly sort of housekeeper to the town. Most of the guests smoked, but the mayor did not smoke.

When lots in Melbourne were first put on the market in Sydney, N. S. W., in 1835, the real estate speculators of that day declared that in ten years Melbourne would soon be a large city. "Yes, a city of kangaroos," declared a scoffer. It turned out that the discovery of gold near Melbourne a little later advanced \$100 plots, in some cases, to a value of from \$100,000 to \$250,000.

A butcher in Paris a few weeks ago called upon his customers with a tray of cutlets reposing on hundreds of banknotes. He asked each customer to choose a portion either of the meat or of the garnishing. Finally, when some citizens protested against his methods, he discharged a siphon of aerated water at them, smashed a plate-glass window, and pelted them with cutlets.

Denzel Ruth Newberry, a four-year-old girl of Sterling, Ill., is able to repeat forty-eight recitations and songs, among the

number being, "Curfew Shall Not Ring To-night," and "Hail Columbia," the total number of words in the forty-eight pieces being thirty-four hundred and fifty. She began learning short poems about a year ago, and when a poem is learned she does not forget it. When reciting she begins with the first poem that she learned, and recites the total of forty-eight poems without being prompted, taking about seventy-five minutes to recite them all.

Among snakes even partial albinism is rare, while wholly white individuals are unknown. Considerable interest therefore attaches to an account of a common water snake of the former type recently given by G. Tornice in a Berlin natural history journal. The specimen, which was obtained in the neighborhood of Berlin and is preserved in the museum of that city, is not altogether colorless, although much of the coloring is very pale. On the back are a number of brownish red spots. There is also a pale yellowish neckband with a blackish brown band behind it. In the eye the iris presents a number of yellowish pigment spots and the pupil is mainly dark red. Very noteworthy is the fact that the tongue is white instead of the normal black.

JOKES AND JESTS.

She (indignantly)—You had no business to kiss me! He—But it wasn't business; it was pleasure.

He—So your husband has given up smoking? That wants a pretty strong will. She—Well, I've got one.

She—So sorry to hear of your motor accident! Enthusiastic Motorist—Oh, thanks; it's nothing. Expect to live through many more. She—Oh, but I trust not.

"At least, the audience didn't hiss," remarked the playwright, after the unsuccessful first night. "No," replied the manager sadly. "They were too sleepy."

Snobley—By Jove! old chap, I'm delighted to see you here, 'pon my word. Do you know, I thought I should only meet smart, clever people here—yes, 'pon my word!

Anxious Mother—Oh, professor, don't you think my dear little Reginald will ever learn to draw? Professor Crayon—No, madam; not unless you harness him up to a truck.

Mrs. Houser—You have broken your father's pipe. What will he say when he finds it out? Johnny Houser—Oh, mamma, surely you don't want me to use that kind of language!

Nursemaid—I'm going to leave, mum. Mistress—Why, what's the matter? Don't you like the baby? Nursemaid—Yes'm; but he is that afraid of a policeman that I can't get him near one.

"It must be very nice," said the caller to the author's wife, "to have your husband at home so much of the time."

"Yes," replied Mrs. Richard Darlington Spriggle. "It gives me a chance to go out."

"To-morrow," announced five-year-old Sidney proudly to his kindergarten teacher, "is my birthday." "Why," returned she, "it is mine, too." The boy's face clouded with perplexity, and after a brief silence, he exclaimed: "How did you get so much bigger'n me?"

ESAU PANDER'S DOOM

By Col. Ralph Fenton.

The war of the Revolution was severe to the scattered settlements of the West, and it is surprising that its hardy population were enabled to sustain themselves against the numerous hordes of savages that, strengthened by the aid of Britain, assailed them on all sides.

In September, 1777, Fort Henry, at Wheeling, originally called Fort Fincastle, was besieged by about four hundred Indians led on by two notorious renegades, Simon Girty and Esau Pander.

The fort was a parallelogram, with a block house at each of the four corners, connected by lines of pickets and inclosing about three-quarters of an acre. The principal gate was on the east side of the fort, next to the few straggling log huts comprising the then village of Wheeling.

The garrison numbered only forty-two fighting persons—including old men and boys—and they were sadly deficient in ammunition.

At the time of the siege, two of the best men, Hiram, or as he was called, Hi Summers, and Jack Finly were absent.

Hi, who was counted the best shot in the whole West, was married to the belle of the settlement, and it was not till the Indians, having failed to capture the fort, set fire to the cabins and were beaten off by General McCullough's relief party, that the men in the stockade discovered that Nell Summers was missing.

They questioned the women and children—none had seen her within the fort.

Elizabeth Kane—whose heroic action in leaving the fort in the midst of the siege to bring in gunpowder, immortalized her name—upon being asked, remembered to have seen Nell in her cabin when the settlers left theirs and took refuge in the fort, but from that hour not one of the devoted little band had laid eyes upon Hi Summers' brave little wife.

They felt sad at this, and two days after when they espied the bereaved husband coming down the road towards the burned settlement, their hearts sank at the bitter news they had in store for him.

Hi and Jack halted as they came upon the ruins, and an ashen pallor overspread the former's sun-brown face.

A minute more and the worst was known.

He ran forward to the ashes of his hut and stood for some moments in silence, the tears trickling slowly down his dark cheeks, then his eyes fell upon something standing bolt upright in the midst of the ruins, and darting forward, he tore it down.

It proved to be a bit of board nailed to a stake driven into the ground, and across the former was scrawled by a finger dipped in blood, the following words:

"Who owns Nell now?

"ESAU PANDER."

The blow struck home.

The hardy settler dropped the board and reeled back with a gurgle of horror.

"Steady, Hi," cried Jack. "What air it, lad?"

"Look!" the wretched husband cried, pointing to the letters in blood; "look—that ar varmint has kept his oath, and Nell is in his dirty hands!"

Jack looked at the board, then at Hi, and said:

"See here, pard, I never heard tell on any oath wot Esau Pander took agin yer. What is it, Hi? Tell me; you kin count on my arm."

"I know it—I know it," replied Hi. "Come away, Jack; come inter the fort, I'll tell ye all, boyee."

He seized Finly by the arm and dragged him into the fort, then, surrounded by all those faithful hearts, he told the story of Esau Pander's hatred.

"He used to love Nell in the old settlement," he went on, "but ther gal never took notice on the snake, but he knew how matters stood between us, and because I won her in a fair and square chase for the victory he set traps fur me, fired on me in the woods, set the Injuns on my trail, and tried his best to put me out of ther way. But, boyees, he couldn't do it, for I moulded the bullet fur his heart, an' thar she goes now, down the ba'r'l of my musket. Wall, one day, as I was comin' through the brush, I hearn a woman scream. I sprang forward and saw Pander with Nell in his arms. He dropped her when he seed me, and cut for the timber. I fired arter him, ruining that left arm of his'n, and turnin', he let rip a fearful oath that I should suffer an' Nell should some day belong to him. I warned him I'd strike him dead next time we met, an' so he sheered off, jined the Injuns, an' I aren't set eyes on him since. He may be near, he may be miles away; but I takes, here before God an' man, the oath never to rest till that bullet's squar inter his black heart!"

As he concluded he rose from his seat, pushed open the door, and passed out of sight among the distant trees.

For three days and nights he was gone, and on the fourth morning he darted into the fort pale and trembling, and called upon the men to assist him.

"Wannaseebe" (she was a friendly squaw), said he, "put me on the trail. The snake is on the other side of the river, near Filmer's Chasm. I'll go it alone, lads, but I'll take yer aid an' thank ye."

Every man was willing, but some must be left to guard the fort, and with twenty true hearts at his side, he sallied forth and took up his station upon the banks of the river.

Night fell.

About a mile down the stream upon the opposite bank, a faint golden light suddenly pierced the gloom, and a thin trail of white smoke arose among the trees.

This fact filled their hearts with joy. Only a portion of the savages were stationed there, and they were signalling their companions to return.

The banks of the stream were thick with logs, and quick as a flash, Hi rolled one into the water, placed his gun on top, and slipping down so as to be screened from the savages, let the timber drift down the river.

The pioneers followed his example, and away went the logs, following the daring leader into the very jaws of death.

As Hi swept past the savages he raised his head, and saw the glitter of the fire, a party of the wretches watching the drifting logs.

Down dropped his head, the logs one by one swept past, the little party landed half a mile below, and then pressed on towards the savages.

Lashed to a tree on the edge of Filmer's Chasm, Nell Summers, white as death, stood glaring around on the scene about her.

The Indians were clustered together a few yards distant, and in their midst she could see the tall form of the renegade, Esau Pander.

He was gesticulating wildly, but talking lowly, and Nell felt that he was making her the subject.

In a few moments he left the savages, and, striding forward, confronted the helpless captive.

"Look hyar, Nell," he said, "you've spurned my love thrice since you have been here, and I'm goin' to give yer a last chance. The reds are bent on hangin' yer and leavin' yer body fur that whelp, Summers, to find. I've had a hard job to get 'em off, my gal, and, unless you become mine, you'll swing from yonder branch as sure as fate. Weigh my words, gal, or it'll go hard with yer."

She lifted her blazing blue eyes to his face, her lip curled scornfully, and she replied:

"Esau Pander, I'd rather die a hundred times by the worst possible torture, than disgrace Hi Summers by thinking over your proposition for one single instant. Go, coward, leave me to my death, it is preferable to your presence!"

Esau Pander sprang back with a shriek.

"The rope—the rope!" he foamed. "I'll teach this jade how dear life is!"

The Indians sprang forward and placed the rope in his hand.

Pander made a running noose in one end, cast it over Nell's head, and then flung the slack over the branch.

A few slashes severed the bonds which held her to the tree, her hands were pinioned behind her, and, pale as ashes, she awaited her fate.

The rope drew tightly around her neck.

"Choose!" cried Pander.

"Death!" was the gurgling reply.

She was lifted up till her toes just swept the ground.

"Choose!" again cried the renegade.

She opened her lips to speak—there was no sound, but the movement framed once more that word:

"Death!"

"Up with the hag! Death then be it!"

The rope passed quickly over the branch and the body of the woman dangled in mid air.

"Ha-ha!" cried Pander. "You learn what death is! Who now is the winner?"

"I am!" cried a deep voice, and before Esau Pander could speak another word, a bullet passed directly through his heart, and Hi Summers headed on the men from the fort.

The savages, taken unawares, turned to flee, but the pioneers fell upon them like an avalanche and fairly cut them to pieces.

Nell Summers was not much hurt and had no cause to regret her bitter experience, for it taught her how dear she was to the man she loved and called husband.

Fearful of the future, Hi and his wife came East and settled down in a less dangerous spot, and so happy was their after life that all shadow was soon dispelled and they learned to forget Esau Pander's doom.

A SLIGHT MISTAKE

Upon Van Ness avenue, San Francisco, is Dr. Potts, Mr. Guff's next door neighbor, and one morning, about two weeks after the latter had started in to become an amateur performer on the bassoon, he was informed that the doctor wanted to see him, and on descending to the parlor found that gentleman sitting in the middle of the sofa, and flanked by three other residents on the same block. Mr. Guff was surprised to notice that the whole party wore a solemn and embarrassed look, and he inquired the nature of their visit.

"We have come, Mr. Guff," said Dr. Potts, wiping his face, "upon a most delicate mission. A mission, I assure you, my

dear sir, that nothing but the most urgent necessity would induce us to undertake."

"Indeed?" said Guff.

"We don't mean to assert, or even hint, Mr. Guff, that the fault is all on your side. I know—we all know—how difficult it is to get along always with the same woman. There are times, sir, when the best wife has 'tantrums' it would require the patience of an angel to contend with. We all know that."

"You bet we do," said the other neighbors in chorus, and one of them passed his fingers through his well-oiled locks in a sadly reflective manner.

"But on the other hand some allowance must be made for the domestic trials and annoyances to which women are subject. They are the weaker vessels, Mr. Guff, and we should always bear that in mind before proceeding to extremities."

"Did you come to tell me that?" said Mr. Guff, somewhat sarcastically.

"Exactly, my dear sir; we have come to have a quiet little talk with you. In a friendly spirit, you understand, Mr. Guff. We come, my dear sir, in a spirit of peace and conciliation, to pour oil on the troubled waters."

"Oh, you have, eh?" said Mr. Guff.

"Yes. You are a young married man, Mr. Guff, and doubtless lack the experience in some respects that we possess. Now, there are other methods in the arrangement of women more potent than violence. For instance, when Mrs. Potts gets a little too cantankerous I just suggest that perhaps she had better put off buying that new dress until next spring, or something of that kind. Works like a charm."

"My way is to hint that I shall have to stop the girls' credit at the dry goods store. That generally fetches my domestic autocrat," said another.

"I go most on the 'no country this summer' dodge," put in a third.

"Fried oysters in a box is probably as good a mollifier as any," mused the baldest of the party, "and I've tried most everything; beside, they are cheaper."

"Will you oblige me by explaining what all this d—n nonsense is about?" said Guff, who was becoming exasperated.

"Why, you don't mean to deny, Mr. Guff," said the spokesman, reproachfully, "that you beat your wife in the most cruel manner?"

"Beat whom?" screamed Guff.

"Why, that you drag Mrs. Guff up into the garret nearly every evening, and hammer her all up with a bed-slat or something," said one.

"And yank her around the room by the hair till she yells like an Indian chasing a mail coach in ahead of time," said another.

"It's perfectly blood-curdling. 'Specially on Wednesday nights," added another indignant householder.

"Wednesday nights! Why, those are the evenings when I practice music with my brother-in-law," stammered Guff.

"What, up in the garret?" said Dr. Potts, turning very red in the face.

"Yes; we are learning the bassoon and cornet together, and—"

"Mr. Guff," said the committeeman, getting up very much embarrassed, and holding out his hand, "we apologize—we'er—that—is—good—good evening, Mr. Guff," and they hastily filed out.

But as they have since agreed to take fifty tickets apiece the first time Mr. G. appears in an amateur concert, that amiable young benedict has agreed not to let the story out, and especially not to allow those mean press fellows to get wind of it.

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